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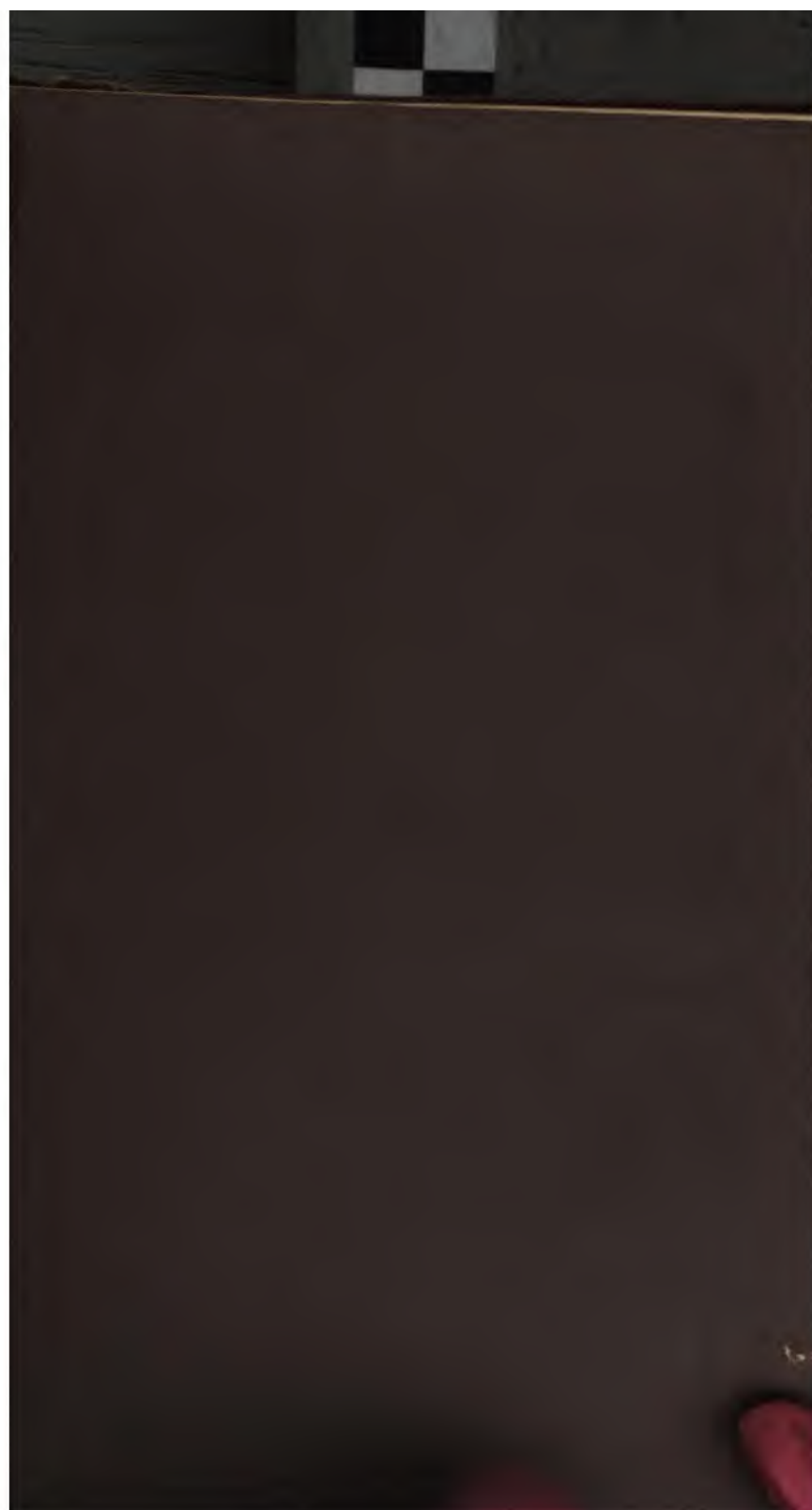
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The Destiny of Men—What?

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YOUTH AND YEARS

AT

OXFORD,

IN

*Conversation on Questions of the Day.*

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PART 1.

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BY

MANTHANO.

OXFORD: G. SHRIMPTON, 9, TURL STREET.  
LONDON: WHITTAKER & CO.

—  
1872.



## I.

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ALIQUIS. At some distance, Sir, I thought it was you. You appear to be enjoying this fine walk.

NEMO. This is a favourite stroll of mine. Here one finds something like quietude. I am glad, nevertheless, to meet you in this still region.

ALIQUIS. What connection may there be between thinking of a person, and presently seeing him? This so frequently occurs that one might almost fancy thought caused the appearance. Without any expectation of our meeting, I was thinking of you before you came in sight. I should add, however, that for some days I have had you more or less in my mind, and have been wishing for an interview.

NEMO. I am quite pleased to see you here, for if we had not had the good fortune to meet, a long bracing walk like the one you have taken will be of service to you in many ways. But tell me in what way I have been occupying your thoughts?

ALIQUIS. I have been thinking of you in connection with the last sermon or lecture I heard from you. The subject of that discourse has of late, I must own, had a great share of my attention. S<sup>t</sup> " I



be pardoned if I tell you, I was so disappointed and disquieted with your views that I seriously contemplated writing you?

NEMO. Do let me know what you found so distasteful. Perhaps it was not so much the subject itself, as my mode of handling it.

ALIQUIS. To be candid, it was the subject itself, being what you described "The Endlessness of Future Punishment." For several reasons I had concluded this doctrine was not in your creed.

NEMO. You surprise me. Was there any portion that struck you as particularly objectionable?

ALIQUIS. I was disappointed with the topic of discourse, and with your representations of it, and in the introductory sentences resolved to pay but slight attention to what might follow.

NEMO. Perhaps the text disconcerted you, rather than my observations.

ALIQUIS. A little in that. A thousand passages might have been discoursed from without selecting one so mysterious and controversial. I venture to think that such subjects as your text suggested, are better omitted in pulpit ministrations.

NEMO. The words are given us by Christ, and may I not inquire, ought not His words to be discoursed from by professedly Christian teachers? Have I not heard you in glowing language unfold a lofty admiration of His character, and declare Him to be the wisest, the holiest, and the most trustworthy of Instructors? I would not give to this solemn subject a greater prominence in pulpit teaching than it occupies in Holy Scripture, but to deny it, or discard it, I should regard as unfaithfulness to the Bible. Account for it as we may, it does make up a great portion of our Saviour's teaching, and is found with more or less distinctness in every portion of the Word of God.

ALIQUIS. Are you aware, Sir, of the contempt, (I might use a stronger word) with which this dogma of "Eternal Punishment" is regarded by the intelligent people of this age? "The doctrine of endless torments, if held, is not practically taught by the vast majority of the English clergy. How rarely in these modern days have our pulpits resounded with the detailed descriptions of future punishments, which abound in the writings of the seventeenth century! How rarely does any one, even of the strictest sect, venture to apply such descriptions to any one that he has personally known! And when we read the actual grounds on which the belief is rested by those who now put it forth as one of the essential articles of faith, we find that it reposes almost entirely on the doubtful interpretation, in a single passage, of a single word, which in far the larger proportion of passages where it occurs in the Bible, cannot possibly bear the meaning commonly put upon it in this particular text\*."

NEMO. I am aware of the opposition to this doctrine by what are called the freer spirits of our times, but your observations just now, quoted from a well-known writer, are by no means a warrantable representation of this matter. It is true enough there is too much, in the professedly Christian teaching of the day, of a marked forgetfulness of the sterner side of the Divine character, and a well-nigh omission of the enforcement of the "severity" of God. This kind of teaching is not the counterpart of our blessed Redeemer's, nor that of His Apostles'. In the scenes of creation you will find beauty and terror; in the dispensations of Providence you will find judgment, as well as mercy; and in Revelation you are frequently apprised of the exercises of chastisement, and law, and power, as well as tenderness and love. Our modern teaching is, we fear, as you have stated it,

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\*Dean Stanley's "Essays on Church and State," 1870. Essay iii., p.



one-sided, with no ruggedness, with no depth of warning, with no retributive justice. In these days the sinner is almost complimented, and the fullest apologies are offered for disobedience and crime. But you know the old proverb, "It is not all gold that glitters," and many who trifle with this weighty truth of Scripture, and are sarcastic and unbelieving, can give but a poor account of their conduct. Let me say with the utmost seriousness, that, in our day, as well as in all time preceding, the most masculine and furnished minds are compelled to believe in the endless duration of the punishment of the finally impenitent, from the weight of Biblical evidence. You will not think I am boasting when I aver, that Christian ministers who are faithful to their calling, do not live in ignorance of current literature, and are not unacquainted with the temper and scepticism of their age; but in fairness to them it should be mentioned, that so many objections to the word of God, and in particular to this awful doctrine, are known by them to be so frivolous, and only old foes in new faces, that they deem it unnecessary to be constantly referring to them.

ALIQUIS. I was hardly prepared for such a statement. To be honest I must confess to a notion, and I believe a very general one, that the ministerial teachers of Christianity know little of the phases of modern thought, of scientific discoveries, and the advanced and scholarly knowledge of Biblical facts and doctrines. It may appear presumptuous in me, but I should not hesitate to enter on a discussion with any one to prove, that this horrible dogma of the eternity of the punishment of the wicked is contradicted by human reason, by our highest knowledge of God, and by the obvious teaching of the Bible itself.

NEMO. Readily do I concede that this subject is one of stupendous awfulness. It is one that has

taxed the powers of the greatest and best of our race, and from earliest times down to our day has awakened the most anxious consideration. It is a subject that should be approached with the greatest calmness and purity of feeling, for while we look into this frightful abyss, we may well tremble to think that we ourselves stand on the precipice. Dogmatism and uncharitableness are strangely at variance with the solemnity of faith in the appalling reality of a Divine and endless wrath to come! Thoughtfully and respectfully would I say, however, you will find it extremely difficult to maintain the propriety of your strong declarations just uttered. We are several miles from Oxford, and in returning I shall have no objection to talk with you on this matter. I am not fond of what are called "discussions," they are a little too ambitious and perilous for me, but we may have a free conversation, each striving for the attainment of truth, rather than victory.

ALIQUIS. It is kind of you, Sir, to speak in this way, and I will endeavour carefully to weigh your words.

NEMO. Let us at the outset understand each other. We shall be at liberty I hope to ask questions as we go along, so that our conversation may be honest and thorough as far as it goes. I do not marvel at your doubtfulness on this subject. You have told me it has of late been engaging your thoughts, and you may have become acquainted with some of the numerous and plausible attacks upon its truth and defenders. I repeat, attacks upon the defenders of this doctrine, as well as upon the doctrine itself. For, with few exceptions, the adverse publications of our time aim more at the ridicule and reprehension of the teachers of this solemn truth, than attempt a reverent and searching examination of the foundations on which it rests. You will allow me to say f



that the human heart is biased to begin with, on the side of opposition to a doctrine so frightful as the everlasting punishment of the wicked. I have long held the opinion that all young people are more or less sceptical on religious matters. Every young and fresh heart is "a heart of unbelief," and fancies it sees what was never before seen, and knows what was never before known. Hence these youthful inquirers need the greatest forbearance and patience. I had far rather encounter the queries and difficulties of sceptical, but ingenuous, youth, (and many such I believe there are), than the pertness and stolidity of a contemptuous doubter.

ALIIQUIS. Will you have the goodness to re-capitulate the outlines of the discourse to which I have referred?

NEMO. I may be able to give you a summary of my observations, and on reaching home shall be happy to supply you with a fuller report.

The statement of the text, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal\*," naturally led me to inquire into its connection, and I remarked that the chapter from which these words are taken, contains the parable of the ten virgins, and the parable of the talents; the one designed to enforce Christian watchfulness, and the other Christian fruitfulness. I afterwards said that these impressive illustrations of Christian life are followed by a vivid representation of the Day of Judgment, personal salvation and individual responsibility being revealed in relation to this advent of Christ. At the world's Great Assize there will only be two classes of character, the righteous and the wicked, and but two separate destinies awaiting them.

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\*Matthew xxv., 46.

ALIQUIS. That I remember, but I thought it required more proof than you furnished.

NEMO. Will the Saviour's words admit of any other interpretation? He plainly shews that the life of righteousness will issue in endless blessedness, since He represents the Judge as welcoming the righteous to the Kingdom of Glory, while the language addressed to the other class of character is, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Is there not here a final finding of character, and but two destinies, alike unchangeable and endless? What can our Saviour's words to the ungodly and unholy mean, but their utter and fixed divorce from God, and from all that is good, a dismal banishment to a region of conscious and unending woe? The text announces the perpetuity of the character formed on earth, which is so markedly stamped upon the crowds before the Judgment Throne, that, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, so distinctly the Judge separates one class from the other. Under the eye of Omniscience they divide according to their felt relationship to the Judge. I was careful I think in affirming that religion is not a mere question of words, or beliefs, but determined by works which are manifestations of moral life. Future blessedness, or future perdition, is the result of moral conduct on earth. The course of life pursued in a probationary existence, gives form and character to destiny. Eternal punishment is the direct and inevitable result of rejecting the offers of God's mercy, it is a consequence of conduct, and not any revengeful penalty attached to infirmity, misfortune, or transgression. The "sheep" and the "goats" sustained different relationships to God in time, and since judgment does not alter character, but only declares it, and determines its destiny, the persons symbolized by these names will sustain the same moral rel



ship to God throughout their endless existence. The wicked on earth lived far away from the Divine favour by wilful disobedience; after judgment they will be kept exiled by power from the possibility of obtaining it. Christ does not say the abode of punishment was prepared for earthly sinners from the beginning of the world, for since God is free from evil, He determines no one to evil, but men plunge themselves into the abyss of demoniacal reprobation, and are the authors of their own doom.

In the words of the passage before us, the concluding scene of the Day of Judgment is unfolded, and we are asked to behold the final separation of the two classes of character spoken of throughout the chapter. The sentences of the Judge have been pronounced, and the words in this passage are their execution, or the carrying them into effect; "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." I have been using, I am well aware, solemn words, and their possible application to ourselves, or others, is a painful thought; but after repeated examinations of this text and its connection, I could not honestly speak otherwise. Of course if we begin to speculate and theorize, we may fancy a thousand things, but we shall have first to abandon the common-sense meaning of the Saviour's language. It was my duty further to observe, that the terms which are applied to the duration of the happiness of the righteous, and to the punishment of the wicked, are not only of a similar import, but literally the same, the endless duration of both states of existence being unequivocally affirmed in identical terms. If we doubt the endlessness of the one state, we are bound to demur to the endlessness of the other, and the conclusion will be, there is neither heaven nor hell in the future. The neglect of the conditions, the performance of which secures for the "sheep" eternal life, forms the reason why the

"goats" are consigned to the abode of despair. The endless duration of that character with which both the godly and the ungodly leave the Throne of Judgment is unmistakably declared.

ALIIQUIS. But wait, Sir, that conclusion will require further confirmation. I am not certain that the word translated "eternal" and "everlasting" has anything to do with duration, or continuance in being.

NEMO. Do you mean that it is doubtful whether or not there is an existence of endless blessedness after death, since this word is the only one by which it is revealed to us? If our Lord meant to exclude perpetuity of duration, He would not have used terms which have been from His day until ours misunderstood and misleading. Further, if you exclude the idea of time or duration from such words as "eternity," "eternal life," "eternal death," there is an end of certainty of meaning, definiteness passes into conjecture, and reasoning loses its data. To me it appears plain, that the future life of the righteous is questioned by the bold and gratuitous assertion, that *aiwvlos* (everlasting) has no reference to time or duration.\* An everlastingness of blessedness could not be revealed to us unless distinct and intelligent terms were employed to denote it. Since Scripture represents a future life as a continuation of the present one, its representations, warnings, promises, and duration, must be based on the present nature of man, and existing facts and conceptions. I readily allow the difficulty of forming a conception of an eternity of misery, and as readily acknowledge that the complete idea of absolute eternity, in any relationship whatever, transcends the powers of human thought. Yet, for this reason, you cannot expect me to do such strange violence to the language of Holy Scripture, as insist that words cannot mean what, according to the

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\* Mr. Maurice's "Theological Essays," p. 436.



ordinary rules of construction, they must mean, and which hitherto they have been understood to mean. Everlastingness of blessedness, and of misery, I must repeat, is described in the New Testament only by this word, and it is never used there in a future sense of anything besides. In twelve distinct instances I have noticed it is applied in the Greek Scriptures to the punishment of the wicked.

Here, in passing, let me observe we are nowhere so much in danger of erring and of being imposed upon, as on the subject of religion. Many, in other respects discriminating and consistent, may be charged with folly here, and an abandonment of those rules of thought and prudence, which mark their secular studies and temporal affairs. As an illustration of my meaning, I would remark, we attach a definite sense to the word *αἰώνιος* in Greek authors. You will remember a passage in Aristotle, where this word is explained at length. In describing the highest heaven as the residence of the gods, he says, "that as to the things there, time never makes them grow old; neither is there any change of any of them. They are unchangeable and passionless, and having the best, even the self-sufficient life, they continue through all eternity.\*" If, in reading this passage in the original to another, you were told the terms *αἰών*, *αἰώνιος*, (eternity and everlasting,) had no reference to duration, and were words on which we could place no dependence, you would at once be tempted to despise the man and his assumed scholarship. You would properly say to him, without this meaning of these appellations, the passages in which they occur would have no signification. As a scholar you would maintain, that they express a state or condition of being which knows no ending. Other passages from Greek authors might be adduced, where these expressions are employed with the distinct signi-

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\* De Cælo, Lib. i., ch. 9.

fication of a ceaseless continuity of existence. Why force upon the very same terms in the New Testament Scriptures a different meaning, or deny them a meaning at all? Why affirm that these words in our text are "deliberately meant" not to refer to time? How can this be allowed? The reason suggested is the inconceivability of forming a conception of an eternity of misery. But I ask you, can we form a conception of an eternity of felicity? Can we form a conception of the eternity of the Divine existence? This inconceivability of the human mind is one alleged reason for the denial of the everlasting punishment of the wicked. But such teaching will necessitate our challenging other truths. We cannot solve mysteries and surmount difficulties by altering our ideas of the word "eternal." You must regard such speculations as these as rebellion against revealed truth, and an attempt to make human reason the standard of right and wrong, of knowledge and error. The declarations of Holy Writ are twisted and perverted to accommodate this theory. I am not requiring too much, I hope, when I ask you to concede that Holy Scripture deals with the human mind as it finds it, and that with unmistakable clearness it tells us of a woe of which we have no positive ground for assuming or imagining a termination. If you could acknowledge thus much our conversation would soon close.

ALIQUIS. That Holy Scripture deals with human nature as it finds it I do admit, and I likewise admit "that the plain grammatical sense of the general current of Scripture language must determine its teaching on every subject;" but I cannot concede that the Bible tells us of a future woe, the termination of which we have no reason to assume or imagine. Your doctrine, as I learnt from your discourse is, that all who die without having repented and believed in Christ, will exist for ever



sin and misery. Rather than admit this I could adopt any other of the extant theories on this subject. I could more easily believe that the finally incorrigible cease to be at death, or at the Day of Judgment, or after enduring in another state of being the punishment of their earthly deeds. This notion of annihilation, I must say, whenever it may be supposed to take place, is not a favourite one with me. Then I cannot believe in the eternity of evil, nor in man's necessary and unconditional immortality, and am led to prefer the tenet, which holds that after the wicked have in the future world endured a punishment according to their works, a way of return to God and blessedness will be open to them. Still, any modifications of either the theory of annihilation, or of restoration, I shall devoutly cling to, rather than accept the horrible dogma of everlasting punishment, of everlasting suffering.

NEMO. You are, I think, correct in merging the different human judgments on this oppressive and painful subject into three classes; that of Annihilation, that of Restoration, and that of Everlasting Punishment. I cannot but think you will be surprised at the amount of assumption, speculation, mere fancy, and groundless assertion, with which the eternity of the punishment of the wicked is assailed. You and I can have no possible reason for diverging from the conclusions assured to us by sound canons of Scripture interpretation, and the legitimate meaning of words, and in our friendly controversy let us be faithful to them.

I notice you have the New Testament with you, and I pray you look carefully at the context of the passage from which I discoursed, for I cannot but suppose you will find the explanation I have given of the words of the Saviour, their unforced, obvious, and only meaning. Bear in mind, here, two facts; that the endlessness of the future punish-

ment of the wicked was the accepted doctrine of the Jewish people, during the life and ministry of our Lord. On several occasions His teaching contained a plain declaration of the immortality of the soul, both of the good and of the bad, and that this was the popular doctrine might be proved from many passages from Josephus and Jewish writers. This terrible doctrine was taught to the people, who received the words in a sense as profound and awful as can be attached to them. The other fact I wish you to ponder is, that the honesty and transparency of Christ's character render it impossible for Him to have had a reserved signification in His own mind, while identifying His teaching so plainly with popular opinion. "The common people heard Him gladly," but is it for a moment to be admitted, He knew they were accepting His words in a sense contrary to His own view of their meaning? Have not the words, from Apostolic times down to our own, the words "eternal" and "everlasting," ever been received as teaching perpetuity of existence—and yet from these very terms, it is affirmed, our Lord has "deliberately excluded the notion of duration\*"? What is the authority for such an assertion? Such gratuitous declarations are as offensive to our conception of Christ's character, as they are contrary to sound criticism and common sense. It by no means follows that a whole eternity of misery hangs upon a word, but it is of the utmost importance to remember that in many other passages, as well as in the text, the duration of the doom of the wicked is affirmed by words which directly mean everlastingness; and further, the certainty of never ending bliss for penitent and accepted believers is gone, if the words do not signify continuance of existence when applied to the condition of the impenitent and unbelieving.

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\* Maurice's "Theological Essays."—p. 436.



Surely our Blessed Redeemer knew the import of His own language, and surely it cannot be supposed that He ever used one word with an intention to mislead or deceive the people in His day, or His church in after days.

ALIQUIS. Considering that this dismal subject is involved in so much uncertainty, and that good and learned men are at such wide variance on the positive teaching of Scripture, would it not be better to omit the consideration of such matters in pulpit ministrations? A belief in eternal punishment cannot be a necessary article of salvation.

NEMO. If Christian ministers were guided only by feeling and choice, this awful topic would rarely, if ever, be discussed. Pleasure and duty, however, do not always lie in the same direction, and, admitting with Paley, "it is very difficult to handle this dreadful subject properly, and one cause among others of the difficulty is, that it is not for one poor sinner to announce such appalling terrors, such tremendous consequences, against another"; fully admitting all this, I venture to say, the well-instructed ambassador of Christ finds himself unable either to evade or obscure it. I would attribute to no one dishonesty, but award to him the sincerity and uprightness I claim for myself; nevertheless, I cannot consent to your representation of the uncertainty of Biblical teaching on this subject. It is just possible that by being penitent, and dutiful, and holy before God, a man may be saved without the acceptance of this serious verity, but that does not affect the awful case of the disobedient and unbelieving. The universality of the offers of the provisions of redemption may be disputed, and yet the disputer may reach heavenly life, by "giving diligence to make his own calling and election sure." But how very different would be the case, if he were himself

indifferent to a personal interest in Christ ! The denial of this serious doctrine is too generally held with a loosening, and even denying, of faith in other doctrines, and, I cannot but think, always accompanied by a weakening of the motive to purity and steadfastness of Christian deportment. Those terrors of the Lord, which the Great Physician with His perfect tenderness deemed needful for the treatment of sin's disease, and which Holy Scripture in so many parts applies, must not be shunned by the Christian teacher. For myself I love to speak of the blessedness and glory of the righteous, to visit their exalted home, and linger "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." One reason for the more frequent reference to the felicity of the holy dead, is the pleasurable enjoyment in its contemplation. On the other hand the awful solemnity of the doom of the wicked repels, rather than attracts, it affrights and distresses.

As a general remark I would observe, I deem it right from time to time in popular addresses to endeavour to meet the difficulties which are supposed to be connected with great Scripture questions. By a careful preparation, the most intricate matters may be simplified, and by a calm and affectionate treatment of them, the interests of truth advanced. On the matter before us I am ready to concede, that fear is not the most powerful motive to obedience, and may be pronounced a low and earthly dissuasive against sin, notwithstanding it has a power to quicken in the path of duty, a power likewise to deter from evil, for while man's relish for true happiness and duty is enfeebled by the loss of original righteousness, he has acquired a keen sense of pain and apprehension. The consideration of the eternity of future punishment carries with it a practical weight, which bears directly on men's character and conduct, and the belief of a "wrath



come" must excite in the pursuit of heavenly blessedness. The history of the Church testifies to the fact, that great spiritual awakenings have followed the earnest proclamations of the warnings and threatenings of the Gospel. For some years I have not failed to observe, that the Christian watchmen who draw around them the greatest number of hearers in their own pulpits, or in their occasional occupancy of others, are distinguished by their selection and discussion of the grave subjects of Scripture, and their preaching is followed by abiding moral and spiritual results. In contrast, I have noticed that the pulpit addresses of a sentimental and speculative character, a vapid and rhetorical representation of a decorous religionism, is unaccompanied by any special power, the effect dying away at the end of the ringing harmony of periods, the abatement of the glow of poetry, and the ceasing of oratory. Is it too much for us to draw this inference, assuming that God speaks to us in providence, and that He is likewise "the Author of all holy desires, just counsels, and good works," that He has set His seal of blessing upon the preaching of the most awful verities of His own word? Think of the restraints from evil which would be removed by the denial of the everlasting punishment awarded by God, to transgressors dying in a state of disobedience or indifference to His laws! Let the unholy man be assured, that after all his sins and crimes nothing more is to be feared than annihilation, or a "terminableness" of being after some period of punishment, or an ultimate entrance into celestial felicity, and a very ardour will be communicated to his pursuit of evil. When passion and apparent selfish interest are in the ascendant in a man's heart, nothingness of being, or the belief of a subsequent restoration to blessedness, would be but feeble barriers to check indulgence in sin.

But let me seriously propose this question to you. What, if this great doctrine of eternal punishment be true? If the amount of Scripture testimony demonstrate that it is not an open question, and that divergence of opinion on the duration of future punishment, can be shewn to be unreasonable? What, if all our apprehensions of it are but shadows of the appalling reality? Does not the Psalmist teach us that God's wrath is full as great as men fear it is, and more so? Assuming its terrible realness, is not its exhibition and enforcement in the Christian pulpit appropriate, and always seasonable? It is a doctrine belonging to the whole scheme of Christianity, and affecting all the exhortations of Scripture. Admitting only the probability of its reality, we should be greatly at fault in not directing attention to it. What enterprises and toils are originated and sustained by probabilities. Has Bishop Butler stated it too strongly, when calling probability "the guide of life?" That omission of the consideration of this subject which you propose, could only be justified by a positive knowledge of its contradiction of ascertained religious truth, by its clearly admitted opposition to the dictates of reason, or by palpable evidence of its impossibility. Then indeed its exposition in the pulpit and elsewhere would be wrong and mischievous. After a dispassionate examination of the controversy on this momentous subject, that eminent prelate, Bishop Ellicot, whose erudition and fine character you will with me admire, thus sums up his careful survey of the whole matter. "Calm and cool reason leads us to these plain and sober considerations. First, that the balance of Scripture teaching would seem to be clearly in favour of the darker view. Secondly, that the mysterious law known by the general name of the Enhancement of Sin in the individual, and so

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\* Psalm xc, 11.



powerfully sketched out by Müller and others, points the same way. Thirdly, that since hope on this subject is speculative, and fear practical, it is the commonest prudence to have regard to the reasons of fear in our life and conversation. Fourthly, that if man, in his period of probation, join those powers of evil against whom he was presumably called into being to contend, it is but reasonable to believe that he will share their doom.\*" The late Archbishop Whately writes†: "Some have ventured to conjecture, and afterwards confidently to teach, that the condemnation of the wicked in the next world will not be final; which, they contend, is inconsistent with the goodness of God; and that all will at length be brought to immortal happiness. Now, whether this their doctrine be true or not, I scruple not to say, it is highly presumptuous in any one to assert it; since it is wholly unwarranted by Scripture; and therefore, even if their opinion be right, they cannot possibly know it to be right. The expressions used in speaking of the rewards of the faithful, and the punishment of the disobedient, are the very same, denoting that they have no end; as, for example, Matt. xxv., 46, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.' Have we any warrant in Scripture for saying that the same word is to be interpreted literally in one part of the sentence, and in the other figuratively?"

ALIQUIS. It is plain, then, that the real point for us to be agreed upon is, whether the Bible does teach that men who die unforgiven pass into eternal misery?

NEMO. Yes, that is the vital question. If the doctrine be not in the Word of God, let it be surrendered; if clearly unveiled there, we are bound to accept it, although it may exceed our compre-

\* "The Church and the Age," 1870, p. 66. † "Sermons on Future State," p. 216.

hension, afflict our feelings, and find no counterpart in the instructions of creation and providence. If it be a subject of revelation it must be new in nature, and while not opposed to reason, yet beyond its reach as to the ground on which it rests, and the discovery of its utility in the universe of being. On some points I judge we are agreed. Are we not one on the authority of the Bible? Do we not accept it as a truly inspired production? Or, do we admit a human and erring element in it, and yet maintain that the Word of God is contained in the Bible? If this were our view, the inquiry might be pressed against us, who is to be the judge between the Divine and the human in Scripture? We must entertain a less ambiguous view of Holy Scripture to find it of any service to us.

ALIQUIS. These questions bring before us a profound controversy. The Inspiration of the Bible is the greatest question of our age. It underlies all doctrines, and is at the root of all theological teaching. It is the one central and essential postulate in Christian theology. For my own part I have been led to the conclusion, that we must accept Holy Scripture as given to us under Divine dictation and guidance, and, therefore, however incomprehensible in some portions, believe it to be free from error. And yet, while I would battle for the integrity and veracity of the Word of God, I would concede to an intelligent inquirer one or two points. I would tell him that the Bible is written in popular language, the language of appearances, rather than in the language of technical and philosophical accuracy. Its mission is not to inculcate philosophy upon masses of men, but in popular terms to impart instruction on matters needful for their peace on earth, and their endless welfare. I would further concede, it is possible that



errors may have crept into some of its versions. In transcribing version after version, it is quite possible that an error may be committed, an error in words without affecting any truth of substantial import. You know what a handle has been made of the assumed discrepancies in different versions of Holy Scripture, and yet in critical reality I can see very little in it. One of the greatest scholars of our country spent thirty years of his life in diligently collating different versions, for the purpose of restoring the original true text, and the verdict of a life time spent in this investigation was, that as far as the discovery of any substantial error went, he might just as well have saved himself the trouble. These concessions, and it may be one or two similar ones, I can make without abandoning my faith in the Bible as an inspired and authoritative revelation of truth from God to man.

NEMO. I see nothing in these concessions to be dissatisfied with, or to stumble at, for we may claim truth for every thing that comes from God, while admitting the possibility of error in anything that comes from man. On the matter of these transcriptions I would also admit, that, in the case of a single letter, there may be a false idea conveyed with regard to numbers. It is possible, in Hebrew writings, as well as in our own, to mistake one figure for another. And further, in the sixty-five treatises, written by different hands, at different times, and in different places, which form the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, I see nothing suspicious in those apparent discrepancies which some have so greatly paraded. If there had been no variation of representation, there might have been the appearance of a mutual agreement to palm something like a human volume on mankind. These discrepancies do not disturb the truthfulness of the Bible record, but prove that

the particulars are substantially true, although coming to us in different, but not contradictory, accounts. We both believe, then, that the Bible is the inspired truth of God, and not a mixture of truth and error, which every reader, to the best of his judgment and conscience, is to ascertain and settle for himself?

ALIQUIS. Truly, for I cannot but see that this notion of inspiration would deny us the existence of infallible and authoritative truth, and make man's judgment its only test and measure. What in Scripture is not given direct from the Almighty, is so guided and overruled as to include no error, and therefore it is in every part trustworthy and absolute in its teaching.

NEMO. You well know that on matters of investigation and discussion something must be taken for granted. We have narrowed the circle of our inquiries by the hearty acceptance of the foregoing postulate, that the Bible is an inspired book and our ultimate appeal. The Bible everywhere professes to be a statement of positive truth, and to come from God, who loves truth above all things, and we may assume that this great and serious question of the doom of evil-doers will find a representation in its pages.

Touching modern talk on the inspiration of genius, as being on a par with the Inspiration of the Bible, I have been struck with the distinctness with which the greatest of our human writers disclaim the assumption of the word, when applied to themselves or their compositions. As a rule, their famous works, instead of assuming inspiration, are prefaced by earnest invocations for help, from a source superior to themselves, and they would shrink with horror at the idea that they were bearers of an unearthly and Divine message to their fellow men. So much would I aver for the humility and honesty of



genius, albeit some of its admirers may say far higher things for it. On the other hand, how plainly a Scripture writer claims Divine Inspiration, his humility and honesty compelling him to affirm, that he did not "receive the gospel of man, neither was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;" another of his avowals being, that what he taught he spake "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." If we can abide by the above account of Inspiration it will greatly help us in our conversations. Holy Scripture is the foundation of religious teaching, and we shall further agree, that it "containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith." Then I will concede to you that our faith in a subject like the one before us, can only be claimed by positive and abundant evidence. Not a few doubtful expressions, but a multitude of explicit declarations, must furnish the ground of our acceptance of such an awful doctrine as the eternity of future punishment. Having agreed then that the Bible contains the true and explicit record of Divine truth, this question of endless woe resolves itself very largely into a question of grammar, or the meaning and construction of words. The expressions of Scripture must be taken in the sense common to the authors who used them, until some other signification is shewn by the context, or by other statements of those authors, to be required. "The common meaning is the most probable one in each case, the common meaning, not necessarily the literal one, for reasons which Whately gives.\* What the rule means is that, if in nine instances out of every ten, a word has one meaning, the probabilities are as nine to one, that it has the common meaning in any new

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\* Whately's Logic, book iii., sec. 10.

instance. Of course, the burden of proof rests with the man who takes it in the odd sense." The Scriptures are not designed merely or principally, for the study of scholars and critics, but for the instruction of the multitudes, for the guidance of ordinary and unlettered readers. The highest scholarship may be turned to a great account in the examination of Scripture, but the masses of the people have not the opportunity of acquiring erudition, nor is their lack of it an obstacle to the knowledge of God's Word. It is the disposition a man brings to the study of the Holy Volume, rather than a critical apparatus, that God recognizes and rewards. "The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way."

ALIQUIS. I do not see that I can object to these conditions of Scripture investigation. Acknowledging, as we have, the necessity and the possession of a revelation, we are bound unreservedly to abide by its teaching on man's origin, nature, and destiny. I see with you, it must follow, that a correct understanding of the language of Scripture can alone give value to any professed interpretation of it.

NEMO. I have the rather referred to this matter because some expounders of Scripture, as you know, tell us we are not to be guided so much by the letter as by the spirit of the written Word. The passages in Scripture which plainly speak of hell and torments, and future woe, are deemed by them offensive and rude. Under the plea of reverence for the Divine perfections, such individuals disclaim belief in an endless retribution, professing that by it their moral sensibilities are outraged, and assuming a power to comprehend the Divine perfections, and grasp the scheme of God's government. The obvious meaning of the words of the infallible record, cannot well be evaded, but they tell us that a discord



exists between the letter and the spirit of the Bible, and by an arrogant assumption, pretend to separate the chaff from the wheat! They will not endure, professing themselves, indeed, unable to endure the idea, that multitudes of our race are doomed by an infinitely merciful God to an interminable existence of woe. But what a liberty is this to take with the sacred text. It is the usurping of a jurisdiction, to which no man's reason, or moral instincts, is adequate. Where is the warrant for such assumptions? It is one of the clearest and fastest conditions of human thought and reasoning, that conclusions should not embrace anything which was not found in the premises. If we admit these vagaries we shall destroy all definiteness in the teaching of God's Word.

For myself I will say I enter upon the examination of this weighty subject with no other desire than to reach the truth as it comes to us in the plain words of Holy Writ. I do not ascribe to you, or to anyone who entertain opinions at variance with my own, anything else than honesty and uprightness of motive and judgment; and further, on this appalling topic it would be a relief to me if I could be convinced, that the theory of annihilation, or that of universalism, or any of their modifications, could be sustained by the legitimate interpretation of Holy Scripture. This I state for one reason among others, I wish to disavow the "vindictiveness" and "savagism" with which the advocates of future punishment are assailed. Devoutly would I use the words of the Bible, and say; "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." I further state this, however, without the least possible idea that this affecting doctrine is inconsistent with the perfect compassion and rectitude of the character of Jehovah, our guide and authority being the



declarations of God's most Holy Word. With the utmost honesty, and after an examination of the subject extending now over many years, I am compelled to own, if the matter is to be settled by an appeal to the Word of God, that the warrant for a belief in the endless woe of the wicked, is as strong as the warrant for a belief in the endless blessedness of the righteous. I am held to the conclusion, that the two beliefs must stand or fall together. Such phraseology as "everlasting punishment," "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," "eternal damnation," and "tormented for ever and ever," I cannot see how, after all that has been written to the contrary, can be tortured to signify disciplinary inflictions, extinction of being, or any condition of condemnation and sufferings which shall have a termination. The important passage before us, on which my discourse was based, contains as calm and authoritative a prediction of the interminable woe allotted to the unrighteous, as it does of the state of eternal blessedness awarded to the righteous. You tell me that there is "a sudden rhetorical expression in the sentence"; that Christ "dialectically grasped the metaphorical notion of eternity, and deliberately intended to express it;" or you tell me, as the final alternative, that a limited duration *must* of course be attached to *the life*, as well as the punishment; but, as a sufficient reply to these assumptions and twistings, I ask you to look at the Saviour's words throughout the chapter, and to think of His purity and benevolence as a teacher, and say whether eternal life and eternal punishment, the application and appeal of His previous instructions, could be declared in words more unambiguous and emphatic.

ALIQUIS. That is truly a frightful conclusion to reach. On the principles of exegesis agreed upon, I

do hope, Sir, we shall find something in the teaching of Holy Writ less tremendously awful. But will you kindly assign your reasons more at length for such a conclusion?

NEMO. You will, I am sure, admit with me, that in the perusal of the Sacred Page, the most unfurnished reader discovers that it will be well with the righteous, that an endless duration of blessedness will be bestowed on such as have loved God, and done His will in this world. He cannot fail to learn that our personal earthly life is one largely accounted of, and is not, as some dream, a fugitive shadow on the surface of existence. It is declared to have an inseparable relation to a ceaseless life beyond the grave. The most unlettered student of God's Word, finds that after an earthly course of devotedness to God, the righteous will rise to a kingdom of immaculate holiness, of supreme honour, of ecstatic bliss. This is life eternal, life in the immediate presence of the Eternal God, life in eternal youth and glory. It is Christianity alone which gives us a revelation of a holy and blissful home after death, a home overflowing with all that can render life exalted and perfect. You, Sir, enjoy the spring and radiancy of youth, and are held by strong bonds to the life that now is. Your earthly career is not visibly hastening to its setting, it has not, I trust, reached its meridian, and as yet you only read of the attacks upon mortal felicity, which you know were attributed by the ancients to the gods. May no painful sense of the poverty and delusiveness of all things here below, ever overwhelm you. But when you have been some sixty years upon the earth, you will have found many of the blanks and sorrows of life, then the prospect of a calm and exalting Eden beyond the stars, will come to you with an unspeakable attractiveness and hope.



ALIQUIS. I think I can now say we cannot be too thankful for the Gospel revelations of a permanent and felicitous future for the righteous.

NEMO. Yes, here we stand together, and refresh ourselves with this confident assurance of a blessed immortality. The plainest Bible reader learns that everlasting happiness will follow temporary faithfulness to God. Ask this reader why he believes this happiness will follow, and his ready reply will be, "the Bible says it will be so." He will tell you, that the language employed cannot mean anything else than a future holy and happy life. For one I am quite willing to abide by his decision, since the meaning which immediately strikes the mind of a sincere reader of the Holy Volume, is, in most cases, the true interpretation of the Divine Word. "The Bible is safest in the custody of those who have no temptation to abuse it, by forcing upon it a language foreign from its original intentions."

My point is this, ask this same reader what will be the future of such as leave this world impenitent and unforgiven? His answer would obviously be, the punishment of the wicked is unending, since the words which are employed to express the duration of future punishment, are the same used to describe the eternity of the Divine nature, and the endlessness of the felicity of the righteous. He would say,—and he could have no possible motive for perverting the dictates of Inspiration,—the words could not be otherwise understood. On the text before us he would thus reason, if the hope of the righteous be the hope of an eternal life, the fear of the wicked cannot but be the fear of everlasting or eternal punishment. The juxtaposition of identical words unmistakeably declare a parallel perpetuity of both states of being. A thoughtful and unbiased reader of the Saviour's words, if the obvious meaning of His

expressions be accepted, would strongly affirm, if you deny endlessness of punishment in the one instance, you must deny endlessness of felicity in the other. You will excuse me so frequently adducing this argument, since on the most legitimate and critical principles of interpretation, as well as the conclusion of the plainest reading, it may be maintained. That the immediate hearers of the Saviour believed future punishment to be eternal, I may again state can be proved from abundant testimony. One of the earliest opponents of our faith, Celsus, has recorded that the primitive Christian teachers maintained; "that the good should be happy hereafter, but the wicked doomed to punishment strictly eternal, from which opinion," says he, "neither let them nor any other mortal depart." Here I will add, that although I acknowledge a wide-spread scepticism in these days on this doctrine of future punishment, it could, I think, be shewn that the great body of Christian people in our land hold to it as their fathers did before them. "Heresies have seldom or never taken their rise from the mass of the people."

ALIQUIS. That will not be of much weight, since you will admit that the Biblical interpretation of our day is far more complete than it has ever been before. "Nothing is required but steady perseverance and patient tracking of the argument through all its windings, to bring it to bay, and shew that the popular theory in this subject has not an inch of ground to stand upon.\*"

NEMO. I should have thought that a quotation like that you would not have introduced. Let the principle here adopted be carried into other investigations, and common sense, as well as Scripture truth, will not have "an inch of ground to stand upon." So it comes to pass in this enlightened age, that the teaching of the Romish church is

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\* Minton's "The Way Everlasting." p. 35.



correct, that the Bible cannot be trusted in the hands of sincere, because unlearned, readers. An open Bible for the mass is after all no great boon. On a doctrine the most personal, the most solemn and practical, the conclusions of an unlettered, though devout reader, are erroneous, and must not be received! There is then no definiteness of religious truth, but for the initiated and erudite, and our boasted inheritance of a Divine Revelation comes to very little. The poet Cowper in one of his letters writes; "I lay it down for a rule that when much ingenuity is necessary to gain an argument credit, that argument is unsound at the bottom." This observation is pertinent to the matter in hand, for the conclusions of a prayerful, albeit unscholarly, student of Scripture, are sought to be disturbed and destroyed by speculations, by criticisms on the compositions of words, and by the meaning which some of these words *may* have in other passages of Holy Writ, or in some ancient classic. I fully concede the necessity of the application of the strongest reason and highest learning to the examination of God's Word; but the elaboration of theories, and the discussion of recondite etymologies, in order to set aside the obvious meaning of the Sacred Text, must be condemned. It is an easy thing to raise objections, and surround a subject with difficulties. It is easy to shew that such passages as clearly teach the future endless misery of the wicked, *may* possibly mean less than is attributed to the words, or *may* possibly mean something else. You will find many illustrations of my meaning in what I would call the curiosities of scholarship, and an ensnaring minutiae. These conjectural interpreters might perplex any subject, and darken all counsel with their words. In the language of that popular American divine, Beecher, I would say; "I do not accept the doctrine of future punishment

because I delight in it. I would cast in doubts if I could ; but that would do me no good. I could not destroy the thing itself. Nor does it help me to take the word everlasting, and put it on a rack like an inquisition, and make it shriek out some other meaning."

ALIQUIS. But you are prepared to allow that Biblical scholars are very able in these days, and that we have an amount of knowledge on this and other subjects, greatly in advance of preceding times ?

NEMO. We are indeed favoured with an increase and spread of knowledge, in which I rejoice. In all matters of physical science, and in all branches of natural pursuits, we have illuminations before unknown. On spiritual and Divine truths, however, we have not progressed much. The more science has appeared to clear the sky, the more Deity has seemed to hide His face. The tendency of science is to attribute to intermediate laws and streams of force, what Scripture teaches us to attribute to God's presence and handiwork. With regard to investigations purely Biblical, I could not affirm that the truer vision has been vouchsafed to our modern divines, and this I would say while mindful of the claims of many learned, holy, and illustrious names. But the Augustines, the Pearsons, and the Butlers of other times, are not displaced by any of the theologians of our age. We cannot admit novelties in Christian Divinity. Touching the weighty subject immediately under our consideration, I can find little that is fresh, searching, and instructive, in opposition to it in modern authorship. The books and articles in current literature which I have read on your side of this controversy, have abounded in hypothesis, affected superiority, and a large amount and force of assertion ; but little of serious deference to God's Word, and little depth and weight



of reasoning. The apparent endeavour of modern writers on this subject is to make their conclusions agreeable to human nature and finite reason. Like too much of the science of the day, there is a shunning of the supernatural and the miraculous, and an enslaving deference to human judgments. Because an hypothesis, or deduction, appears likely and rational, it must be true! Man's reason is thus made the rule of truth. My strengthening conviction is, we shall learn more of the mind of the Spirit by a personal study of God's Word with humility and prayer, than from human authors. I utter it advisedly, what light and quietude would come to us, if we could individually, with reverence and teachableness of soul, exclaim; "my heart standeth in awe of Thy Word."?

ALIQUIS. But you will fully concede the advantages of scholarship in the study of Holy Scripture.

NEMO. Undoubtedly. I should be one of the last to discourage its acquisitions, or seek to depreciate its value. Reverent and scholarly criticism will be sure to yield rich fruit, and this I would foster and advocate with all my power. But if the meaning which the common minds of common men (to whom the Gospel is mainly addressed,) the meaning they attach to the words of the Saviour and His Apostles on the certainty and duration of the future punishment of the wicked be rejected, and another sense be forced upon them, then there is an end of the definiteness of Scripture teaching, affected scholarship has it all its own way, and the Bible becomes a sealed book, to be unloosed only by learned and professional hands. This awful doctrine is one of the utmost practical importance, affecting the most serious interests not only of the learned but of the unlearned, not only of the promoters of a higher criticism among us, but of the multitudes, and if the common people are invariably wrong in their

interpretations of Scripture on this subject, then it is not a book for them, but for such as have leisure and erudition sufficient for "the tracking of a lengthy argument through all its windings."

ALIQUIS. I cannot but remind you here, that the expressions "for ever," "everlasting," "eternal," are frequently employed in reference to things notoriously transitory, and that in other passages the extent of duration indicated is uncertain. In passages as the following, they can have only a finite and limited meaning. "The utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." "Ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." "His children shall sit upon his throne for ever." "A servant for ever." "The everlasting mountains were scattered." These expressions do not certainly then always in Scripture signify endless duration. Can these words be used in different senses? In these and many similar passages the word "everlasting," and the phrase "for ever and ever," must be taken as denoting something short of eternity, and may mean no more than an "age," or "age of ages."

NEMO. I grant of course that these words in such Scriptures as you have quoted denote periods of limited duration. They explain themselves in their application. Ordinances, hills, dispensations, and servants during the course of time, cannot possess an endless duration. But does not God claim an absolute everlastingness of Being? Are not His perfections of interminable perpetuity? Is not heavenly blessedness unending? Then the question is, have we any words in Hebrew, Greek, or English, which can describe or declare in a sufficiently intelligent manner, an absolute everlastingness of existence? You admit that such words are to be found. You admit that the endlessness of God's Being, and the endlessness of heavenly glory, are plainly revealed to us in Scripture. By what ex-



pressions, I ask, are these truths taught us? Even by the very same which are employed by our Saviour and His Apostles to affirm the endless future woe of the lost. If you say these words have only a limited sense when applied to the doom of the finally impenitent, my answer must be, they can only likewise have then a limited meaning when applied to the perfections attributed to God, and to the glory and blessedness predicated of future heavenly life.

Has it not occurred to you that the quotations you have given are all from the Old Testament Scriptures, and that they all refer to a future, necessarily temporary, by the nature of the case? In the New Testament, on the other hand, it is doubtful whether such a use of the terms is found at all, and I believe the statement cannot be disproved, that these words are never used there in a future sense, except in reference to endless blessedness, or endless misery. Further, this restricted meaning of these expressions is not so common in Scripture as is supposed. Their employment in this temporary and finite sense should be far more frequent to justify the serious conclusion or inference intended. In our own language such terms are found, and occasion no difficulty, as when we say "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever," "the true artist paints for immortality." Here the context fixes the meaning, as it does likewise in the quotations you have given from the Old Testament. When we read of "a servant for ever," it means a servant while life shall last; an "ordinance for ever," is an ordinance until the dispensation closes of which it is a part. There is no danger of being misled by these words when they thus bear a temporary signification, since the nature of the thing spoken of, or the context of the passage, will shew that they cannot be taken in an absolute sense. But

the declarations respecting the future punishment of a being formed with a capacity for an endless life imply no contradiction, nor is their strongest meaning opposed to the nature of the case, nor, as I believe, inconsistent with the general tenor and teaching of Inspiration. I must repeat that if the word when applied to the righteous in a future state be accepted in an absolute sense, so in all sobriety of interpretation must the word be understood, when applied to the existence of the finally impenitent. In the text from which I discoursed, to interpret the term *aionian* literally in one clause of the passage, and restrictedly in the next, is to trifle; and is it not something worse to affirm that the identical word means infinitely more in one part of the verse than in the other? Such teaching is unwarrantable and mischievous. If this mode of dealing with a passage of Scripture be a specimen of enlarged modern scholarship, the less we have of it the better.

It is strongly asserted, I am aware, that "everlasting" cannot be used in different senses, and as I have before mentioned, that it is used with no reference to time or duration. It is easy, however, to furnish evidence to the contrary. The patriarch Jacob, when blessing his son Joseph, uses these words; "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." Here the word "everlasting" is used in a temporary and restricted sense. The prophet Jeremiah affirms; "The Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting King." In this passage the term "everlasting" must be understood as plainly denoting an endless duration or prolongation of time. The prophet Habakkuk in his prayer, trembles before God's Majesty, exclaiming; "He measured the earth, He beheld and drove asunder the nations, and the everlasting mountains were scattered." Here



is another instance of the limited use of this expression. In the prayer of Moses, the man of God, these words are found; "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Here the term must again be taken in an absolute and perfect sense. These, and some similar passages, whether read in the original, or in our version, prove that the word "everlasting" may be employed in different senses, and with a direct application to length or duration of time. What becomes of the strong assertion that this word cannot be used in both a temporary and absolute sense, and that the idea of duration is excluded? "How dangerous," it is said, "to introduce the notion of duration into a word from which our Lord has deliberately excluded it.\*" I am bound to call this mere assertion and unwarrantable dogmatism. What can be plainer than that our Lord, in the parable of the virgins, and in the parable of the talents, refers to character? and that at the close of His discourse He announces the awards of character, by affirming the destiny of the righteous, and the destiny of the wicked,—unambiguously representing a future life as a continuation and result of an earthly one? Yet we are told that duration, succession, time, is excluded from the expressions "life eternal," and "everlasting punishment." We have no intimation from Christ that *He excluded* duration, nor any hint in Scripture that time is not indicated by these words, and I must repeat that such teaching as I have just quoted, would attach to Christ's character the charge of misleading the holiest and most confiding men for centuries, and now make the thought of a future life unintelligible to the mass of mankind.

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\* Maurice's "Theological Essays," p. 436.

ALIQUIS. I understand Mr. Maurice to teach, that there are moral and philosophical objections to a belief in endless punishment which led him to believe, not simply, that it is a mystery, but an impossibility. He reasons that the Divine Being may be what is termed a Being out of time, to whom all events are but one great present, and who is thus exempt from those laws of duration which are impressed upon the human mind by the succession of our thoughts. It is equally conceivable, he continues, that such may be the character of eternity itself, and that the sense of duration may be excluded from it. He wishes to shew, what is very apparent in the popular teaching on this subject, that we are in danger of forgetting those constant everyday judgments, which are intended to lead us to repentance, and that a belief of the fear of punishment is substituted for a fear of sin. He remarks, you may remember, that the present belief in eternal punishment, "reduces the eternal life which Christ offers, into a miserable dream of never-ending happiness."

NEMO. It is just possible there may be some foundation for this metaphysical reasoning. We had better, however, confess the inconceivable character of a life of absolute everlasting misery, and acknowledge that the complete idea of a perfect eternity transcends the powers of human intellect, than deny or obscure Scriptures which assert this awful verity of future retribution. A doctrine may be mysterious and beyond our reason, and yet be true. And I would ask, where are we? Who is our teacher on this subject,—Holy Scripture or modern theorists? Must the Divine Word in our day fall before human speculations? That the idea of duration is to be excluded from the revelations of the nature of God, or from the revelations of man's future, is plainly forbidden by the present constitution of the



human mind, and the teaching of Inspiration, which contains nothing whatever that should lead us to adopt such new and involved conclusions. All its descriptions, warnings, and promises, are so entirely based on our present familiar ideas of language, that man would be compelled to receive a wholly different nature to admit Mr. Maurice's speculative divinity. Besides, as you will learn as we proceed, such teaching contradicts the plainly revealed truths, that our earthly life is probationary, and that its issues will be determined at a final and public Day of Judgment.

ALIQUIS. But does not that passage in St. John's Gospel containing our Saviour's own words; "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent;" teach that the notion of duration is excluded in the use of the term "eternal," and that it only refers to a state or condition of being?

NEMO. With you I am aware of the great importance attached to this passage in the controversy now under examination. In this Scripture the word "life" denotes a holy and happy union with God, begun in time by repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a state or condition of being commencing on earth and consummated in heaven. The nature of this life, which is a subjective experience in man, is a distinct question from its duration. Its perpetuity is expressed by the word "eternal." This is all that can fairly be made of this famous passage. To affirm that "eternal" means a state or condition, excluding duration, is simply unsupported assertion, and is as gratuitous as that other notion, that the only alternative to this spiritual union with God is non-existence. If you and I have believed on the Son of God, our "eternal life" is begun, since it dates not from the morning of the Resurrection, but from

the day of our conversion. Then we have "eternal life" in its elements, and first instalment, while in its perpetuity and higher fulness and glory it is something to come. Our "eternal life," therefore, is the prolongation and perfection of that spiritual state we gain on earth. A legitimate interpretation of Scripture does not countenance Mr. Maurice's contrary doctrine. Life and death cannot be taken literally, but in a spiritual sense, and are plainly used to describe the present living religious state of men before God. So the Apostle instructs the Christians of his day. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," said the Blessed Redeemer, "hath eternal life." It is therefore a present possession, and yet in its more glorious developments, a blissful hope.

ALIQUIS. You, of course, admit that a great portion of Scripture on this appalling subject is metaphorical, and that great discrimination is required in explaining figurative language.

NEMO. Metaphors are employed in reference to the blessedness of the righteous, and yet they occasion little difficulty to the thoughtful reader of Scripture. Metaphors are not employed to diminish the reality of things intended to be described by them, but are used rather to carry the meaning further than plain words have the power to do. Just as the emblems; "trees of life," "rivers of pleasure," "fountains of joy," "harps of gold," "thrones, and crowns," are intended to give most lively and exalted conceptions of the felicity of heaven; so the terrible images "fire and brimstone," "everlasting burnings," "fire that is not quenched," "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever;" adumbrate the indescribable reprobation of the lost. These figures, by the rules of a fair criticism, cannot denote



cessation of existence, or absence of consciousness; they are symbols of suffering, and not instruments of annihilation.

ALIQUIS. My conclusion, from the employment of one or two of these dreadful images, is probably different from yours. Our Saviour speaks of the "chaff being burnt up with unquenchable fire." Could any figure or expression be employed more utterly contrary to the idea of continuance in conscious being? I might ask you to try the experiment of throwing some chaff into an intensely hot fire, and see what becomes of it. Will it not at once be consumed, annihilated, burnt up? and is not this the signification our Lord designed when he applied this imagery to indicate the doom of the wicked? I remember a passage in Homer which teaches that the word rendered "unquenchable" when applied to fire, does not signify it will burn on for ever. Homer tells us, I may remind you, that an "unquenchable" fire broke out in one of the ships before Troy, which was extinguished by Patroclus\*.

NEMO. You are aware you are not now giving an explanation of metaphorical language, but rather the literal interpretation of words, and on this principle you would introduce marvellous confusion into the representations employed to denote the blessedness of the holy dead. Our Saviour, in the context, says of them, that He will "gather the wheat into His garner." Do you believe the pious dead will become grains of corn, and lose their personality? If you deny the symbols a representative meaning in the case of the wicked, you must do it in the other case, and then the righteous after all will not become "equal with angels," but become wheat! It is true that the word "unquenchable" may in poetry, or even in prose, be used in a limited and temporary

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\* Iliad XVI., line 162.

sense, only this does not prove that it is *always* so used. Whenever you have read these solemn passages, "unquenchable fire," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and similar expressions of our Lord as recorded by St. Matthew, have you not invariably regarded them as admonitory and warning assertions? Safely may we abide by the conclusion which an ordinary intelligent reader would give to these expressions, for though he might not be able to furnish the rationale of figurative language, he would shew us that he was not mystified with these symbolical descriptions, by accepting them as illustrations of what he learns on this terrible subject from the plain declarations and the general tenor of God's Word. When suggested that the fire might go out for want of fuel, he would easily reply, that *as a fire* it is "never quenched," and that *as a worm* it "dieth not,"—the miserable sufferer being thus represented; "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

ALIQUIS. For some time past I have held the opinion that the doctrine of the everlasting suffering of the lost, is clearly irreconcilable with the remarkably strong representations of the final disposal of the wicked. They are said "to perish," "to fade," "to pass away," "to wither," "to be consumed," "devoured," "burned up," "ground to powder," "plucked up by the roots," and "destroyed." Can such expressions be explained as an endless continuance of miserable existence? Does not destruction in the Bible mean destruction, and perishing mean perishing, and nothing else?

NEMO. When it is recorded, therefore, that "all flesh is grass" it means, I suppose, this and nothing else! Which of the representations of the doom of the obdurate is to be taken literally, the one that



says they shall be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, or the other that affirms they shall be ground to powder? Will there really be as many modes of destruction, as there are representations of it? No book can be fairly interpreted if its imagery be confounded with the truths it represents. Numbers of words in every language have a primitive or ruling sense, but a secondary sense may be attached to them, which plainly distinguishes them from their original signification. There are in some of the terms you have quoted both a literal and a figurative meaning. "Destruction," for example, which is the opposite of salvation, is in the Epistles more commonly used in a figurative sense than in a literal one. The only safe rule by which we can interpret words is the one already given, that is, to abide by the meaning common to the author who uses them. The literal sense of an expression cannot always be the ruling one, sometimes, as the context will indicate, the expression must be received figuratively. I readily acknowledge that the word "life" does sometimes, in Scripture, mean natural existence, and that "destruction" sometimes signifies natural death; but, and this applies particularly to the New Testament, they are almost always used figuratively to describe a moral state before God. In your Homer or Virgil you do not make the literal sense always over-rule the figurative one, but the figurative expressions are interpreted in harmony with the general meaning and argument of the writer. Both states of future being, the one of everlasting joy, and that of ever-abiding woe, are revealed to us in terms largely figurative; and we ask for the account of one state the same consideration of metaphor that is accorded to the other. Heaven is shadowed out by the most sublime and beautiful emblems; its inhabitants are to be clothed

"white robes," "crowns of glory on their heads," "palms of victory in their hands." The most unlettered reader accepts these terms as descriptive of happy celestial existence. So I must add, hell, as a place and character, is represented by emblems no less emphatic; there is "the worm that dieth not," "the fire that is unquenchable," and "the smoke of torment ascending up for ever and ever." We do not minutely and literally explain these words, but accept them as awful metaphorical descriptions of the retribution of the finally impenitent of our race.

ALIQUIS. Is there not weight to be attached to the opinion maintained by many, that the frightful expressions employed to adumbrate the doom of the incorrigible are of a nature too appalling to be true, and that they are intended only to alarm sinners? These punishments are announced, it is supposed, more effectually to deter men from sin, and sustain more firmly the authority of God's law; but in reality wilful and unyielding transgressors will be annihilated at the hour of their death; or, as I am disposed more readily to believe, will survive death, and be condemned at the Day of Judgment, and afterwards restored, through some remedial means, to God's favour and happy life.

NEMO. How wise is the caution of one of the articles of the Church of England, that we must take the threats and promises of God as they are generally set forth in Holy Scripture, leaving them in their simplicity and awfulness to affect the mind. Unless we cling to the words of Scripture, where is the guarantee that two men will think alike, or speak alike, on this awful subject, or indeed on any Christian doctrine? Unanchored at the Bible we shall drift into a thousand theories and speculations, to the great damage of practical belief and godliness. The notion you have just broached is a dangerous conceit, and a specimen of the shifts



and perversions men resort to, who abandon the plain meaning of God's Word. This hypothesis assumes that the Faithful Creator can falsify Himself, and has been obliged to make use of a fallacy in the government of the world. I shudder at the affront here offered to the holy and adorable character of Jehovah. It implies that He intended men should believe it to be a certainty that wilful sinners will be subjects of an eternal reprobation, but that scholarly and discerning men have discovered the cheat, and exposed the pretence. It is, I know, said in extenuation that human threatenings are often revoked without any impeachment of veracity, so it is inferred, God may remit His alarming asseverations. It is true human threatenings are often withdrawn because, it may be, uttered in hastiness and ignorance, or, it may be, from the impossibility of carrying them into execution; but are these reasons applicable to the Divine Being? "Is He a man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should repent?" The fearful declarations of the eternal punishment of the wicked must be taken in their plain and positive sense for two reasons among others. They are designed to shew the necessity and greatness of the redemption by Christ Jesus; and to enforce by the most solemn considerations the acquisition of the blessings of this redemption.

ALIQUIS. We read, however, in the book of Jeremiah, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me and I was deceived.\*" May not such language as this suggest the idea that for securing a higher moral good, God does sometimes impose upon His creatures ignorance and deception?

NEMO. I see you are quoting Origen. In his comment on this passage he does venture to im-

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\* Jeremiah xx., 7.

peach the Divine veracity. But we cannot for one moment entertain the thought that the Lord dealeth hypocritically with us. I cannot on any terms concede, that sin or deception is an element in God's government of His creatures. Respecting sin, or falsehood, or duplicity, His language is, "O do not this abominable thing which I hate!" "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." The words you have quoted will not at all favour our dream. The prophet Jeremiah in the context, is evidently referring to those promises which God made when He called him to his arduous office, in the discharge of which he was in daily derision, every one mocking him. You will find the passage should be rendered, "Thou didst allure me or persuade me, and I was allured or persuaded." This is the literal sense of the Hebrew words, which you may easily verify. It does not either directly or indirectly intimate that the faithful Creator falsifies Himself.

ALIQUIS. You hesitate not, Sir, I perceive, to alter our translation, and give another meaning to words, after all you have said to the contrary. I thought we agreed to accept the terms of the Bible in their plain and obvious meaning.

NEMO. Just so. My emendation is the unforced reading of the original text, which, in the first place, every passage in our version should faithfully represent. Then the meaning of the context must be taken into account in an attempt at a rightful exposition. Any ordinary reader of the context, would, I should suppose, demur to the conclusions Origen has deduced from the words you have quoted. But here mark how all this kind of representation diverges from the subject we have now in hand. On the eternity of celestial happiness we are agreed. We believe in eternal glory, in the blessedness of an everlasting kingdom, secured to us by the re-



demption which is in Christ. On one occasion our Saviour said, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail on earth they may receive you into everlasting habitations." I turn to this passage and look at the word "everlasting," and discover it is the precise adjective employed in St. Matthew's Gospel to characterise the punishment of the lost. But you tell me, I repeat, that the word "everlasting" in this passage means something short of eternal, nay, that time or duration is designedly excluded. That I call an unreasonable altering of the meaning of words, and the wrenching of them from natural and familiar conceptions. To use Mr. Maurice's own words, "this is to practise the most violent outrages on the language of Scripture, insisting that words cannot mean what, according to the most ordinary rules of construction, they must mean.\*"

ALIQUIS. I see no reason why the phrase "everlasting habitations," may not be taken in a literal and absolute sense. Certainly if the Greek term translated "everlasting" possesses there any meaning, it must signify something endless, something for ever and ever, something changeless and eternal.

NEMO. So I think. But why should it not have this meaning when used in reference to the coming punishment of the wicked? The language of our Saviour is, as I have said, in the form of a prediction, affirming of the obdurate and rejected, that they shall go away into "everlasting punishment." Is He one of your false prophets? Does He use the language of treachery and error? I persist in asking, why do you in this passage alter the meaning of the word? The Scripture you have instanced from Jeremiah will bear the alteration I have mentioned on lexicographical grounds, and is a meaning re-

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\* "Theological Essays," p. 302.

quired for many reasons. Have you as firm a ground for altering the ancient and obvious signification of the term "everlasting"? You tell me that the reason for its restricted meaning in its application to the destiny of the wicked is found in a comprehensive and careful survey of Divine truth, and that by "tracking the argument through all its windings," the conclusions reached necessitate the alteration. Or you tell me, that the conjunction in the text establishes a difference in the duration of the awards declared by the Saviour. Or further you say, the idea of unceasing, endless suffering is so revolting to human feelings that the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment cannot be true, and if found taught in the Bible, that particular portion of it cannot be inspired. Finally, you affirm, that the teaching of this "hideous doctrine," this "millstone tied about the neck of Inspiration," fosters infidelity and opposition to the Gospel, and that so long as this doctrine is identified with the Christian faith, disbelief and contempt will be the consequence. These are some of the reasons adduced to set aside the solemn and positive teaching of plain words. These are the principles of hermeneutics employed to denude the words of our Saviour of their obvious signification. But I must tell you all this is mere theorizing, rather than subjecting the terms of Scripture to a satisfactory exegetical ordeal.

ALIQUIS. I am sorry our conversation must soon close. I think we must quicken our pace a little, and appear less controversial as we approach Oxford.

NEMO. Yes, there is Oxford. What a world of interests gather there. From some such prospect as this, when the city was surrounded with water, Keble once exclaimed, "thy towers are safe." May



we not add, "thy foundations are safe"? I often think, what, if all the intellectual power of this renowned university were on the side of God and His cause, how the whole world would be impressed with its beneficial influence. As some contribution towards so desirable a state, if only for ourselves, let us seek to strengthen each other's faith in the security and preciousness of the Word of God. It is now menaced by a keenness and terribleness of opposition probably heretofore unknown. Two things I deplore in connection with modern religious doubt. One is the use of words in a sense their conventional employment does not allow, that is, the emptying or half emptying of words of their legitimate meaning. The talk, for instance, about inspiration, when is meant only the inspiration of a Milton, or a Shakespeare. By all means let us understand each other, and not talk and debate in the dark. The other matter of regret is the distrust in Christianity which is harboured or avowed, as if her teachers really shrunk from controversy with modern doubt, and were unequal to grappling with a criticism, not indeed reverent and teachable, but one strictly speaking revolutionary and destructive. The theological commotion now perceptible in our midst, so applauded by some, and so feared by others, tends to chaos; yet be assured, when scepticism has settled its articles of creed, and given definiteness of battle, men will be found equal to the challenge, and establish and brighten the demonstrations of our holy faith.

ALIQUIS. Before we separate let me ask if it will be convenient to resume our conversations at an early period? If your engagements will allow, I shall be happy to visit you, or to see you at my rooms, since I own to a desire to have further information on this momentous doctrine.

NEMO. It will be quite agreeable to me to see you early next week at my study, and then we can refer to some of the books which have been quoted or mentioned.

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## II.

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NEMO. I fear we shall not enjoy our conversation so much in this small room, as along those pleasant paths the other day. I have frequently found conversation in the balmy open air refreshing both to body and mind. I should say a solitary walk, as a rule, is not to any of us of particular advantage. And this for several reasons, but we have a different matter before us to consider.

ALIQUIS. In resuming our conversation, it has occurred to me we were only settling the preliminaries of the discussion of the weighty subject of future wrath.

NEMO. Very much so, for we kept branching off till I had not the opportunity of giving the outlines of the discourse which has led to our friendly disputation. If I remember rightly, your first proposition was, that the endless duration of future punishment was a doctrine not found in Holy Scripture. Several times, however, I took occasion to remark that this statement was disproved by the Saviour's plain words, which declared that after the decisions of judgment the two opposite characters, the righteous

and the wicked, the "sheep" and the "goats," would pass into opposite conditions of ceaseless existence. The punishment is affirmed to be "everlasting"; the reward to be "eternal." One destiny is as long and continuous in its duration as the other, reward and punishment being enunciated in the same breath, and in identical epithets. The argument again and again adduced is this, that the duration of the one is as prolonged as that of the other, and therefore if the happiness of heaven be a happiness for eternity, the misery of hell must likewise be a misery for eternity; that is, an unbroken continuity of existence.

ALIQUIS. Yes, but here I must again say that was a little more assumed than proved. How would you present your Scriptural evidence of the eternity of the punishment of the wicked?

NEMO. (1.) I should in the first place affirm, that neither the Greek, nor any other language, possesses more emphatic terms to declare the reality of an endless duration, than those which are employed to express the future punishment of the finally disobedient and impenitent. You have conceded that the New Testament has some expressions which signify an absolute eternity. The abstract idea of eternal duration transcends the power of our thought, and the nearest approach to a human conception of absolute eternity is, that it knows no ending. This idea we can conceive and grasp. It is remarkable, as shewing the accuracy and depth of Scripture language, that the word we translate "eternity," both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, does not so much express the conception of infinity, as that of indefiniteness, that is to say, it expresses a state which knows no ending. The strongest phrase, which either the Scriptures, or any form of language can supply, is that which describes the Godhead as "living for ever." We read for ex-



ample, as expressive of the eternity of the Divine essence, "the Lord is king for ever and ever;" and again, "that He liveth for ever and ever." That this implies an illimitable eternity is indisputable. We read of the righteous that they shall "reign with Christ for ever and ever," and that they shall "shine as the stars for ever and ever." That this implies an eternity to come is again indisputable. Then we read of the impenitent and unrighteous that they are "tormented day and night for ever and ever"; and that the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." That this implies a future and ever existing state of being, appears to me as indisputable as the other. I cannot but learn, that language like this holds out no hope of extinction or restoration beyond the grave, it rejects the dream that there is any other scene in which the state of our souls can be altered, and, I tremble while uttering it, it makes the terrible destiny of woe as unquestionable as the eternity of heaven, and the eternity of God.

Nevertheless, this momentous doctrine depends not upon these strong terms considered in themselves. Other evidences can be adduced, although the emphatic and definite words of our Saviour from which I discoursed, may be accepted as a bulwark of this truth, inasmuch as they certainly contain as conclusive evidence for the everlasting punishment of the wicked, as for the eternal blessedness of the holy dead. In a verse or two preceding the text our Saviour uses this language; "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Do you attach any meaning to these words? If so it must be a meaning of tremendous solemnity. Are there created beings in everlasting fire? In my readings on this subject, I have been

with the absence of sympathy for Satan and the fallen angels. St. Augustine, in his "*Civitas Dei*," urges against Origen the Scriptural difficulties, in which his theories on this doctrine place the fallen angels, which is not in our day so much insisted upon. All our noisy pity is enlisted on the side of unrelenting and doomed men, or the side of human beings who were created in their Maker's image, for whom the labours and blood of the Eternal Son were given, on whom the Eternal Spirit was bestowed, and to whom the precious revelation of Inspired truth and mercy was communicated; they are to be sympathized with and apologized for, but the higher intelligences, who never rejected Christ's sacrifice, nor "accounted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, nor did despite unto the spirit of grace," are without commiseration left to their fate. Unless you deny the existence of Satan and his fellow spirits, and forget ages of condemnation and woe in which they have already existed, indignant apologies for more heinous transgressors seem very unreasonable. Be assured the denial of the literal eternity of the punishment of the wilfully wicked of the human race, will involve you in most serious difficulties, and necessitate the surrender of everything substantial and vital in Christianity. In reply to the allegation, that this doctrine of endless perdition is not found in Holy Scripture, I can only affirm, then, neither is the endless condemnation of the devil and his angels found there, nor the endless happiness of the righteous, nor the endless existence and glory of the Godhead, and the man who denies the one, should, to be consistent, reject all.

(2.) Not only in plain declarations, but in parable, in denunciation, and in warning, I find the Scriptures presenting the prospect of endless sorrow to obdurate and wilful sinners. In that remarkable



Scripture, call it the history or the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we learn that there is a realm of torment in the future world, where its sad inhabitants are for ever alive to their condemned position, where the memory of the past, the consciousness of the present, and the prospect of the future, combine to infix in their bosoms a ceaseless agony of woe. The rich man is represented as in vain imploring relief, as being reminded of having already received his good things, and is told of his exclusion from heaven by an impassable gulf. From these awful words, which the Faithful Witness addressed to His auditors, not surely to mislead but to instruct them, we learn that the future condemnation of the lost does not mean annihilation at death, nor restoration after a penal dispensation. Neither does this Scripture countenance the notion, that future punishment will be of a purificatory character. If we attach any meaning to the Saviour's words, the misery of the rich man is declared to be unchangeable, a misery, alas! for which neither alleviation nor terminableness is suggested. No hint is given of any antidote to the poison which had corrupted and ruined his soul. Of course this account can be called a pictorial representation of the deserts of character, a piece of fiction destitute of reality; but this, we judge, makes it unworthy of the Saviour's name, who designed not to trifle with men, nor amuse them with the play of words, nor deceive them with distortions of truth; in these matters as in all others, He was "separate from sinners." This serious Scripture may be a sketch from real life, and we have no positive proof to the contrary; or if a parable, it could only be employed by the Saviour to make truth more impressive; while to denude it of all meaning must be a specimen of that unwillingness to "consent to wholesome words, even the" of

our Lord Jesus Christ,\*" which the Apostle so pointedly condemns. Then ponder this other Scripture uttered by our Lord. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." It is obvious that the general purport of this warning is, that whatever may be an occasion of temptation or of sin to us, though it be useful as our right hand, necessary as our right foot, or precious as our right eye, we must part with it, we must cut it away as it were a leprous part, or it will lead us to perdition. To give edge and power to His warning He describes this place of perdition as a region "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." It is a region, where the fire is never quenched; and if it is never quenched it must burn on for ever,—or in other words—it is eternal. It is a region where the gnawing worm is an undying worm; and if it never die, then it ever lives,—or in other words—it is eternal. With language before us such as this, coming from the merciful lips of One who loved far more to utter the accents of blessing, and who cannot be supposed capable of deceiving or frightening His hearers with inflated or exaggerated statements, we cannot, without a wilful perversion of His meaning, draw any other inference than this, that the destiny and sorrow of the wicked are the destiny and sorrow of eternity.

It is true that such passages are figurative, but this fact should not lead us to diminish the signification of our Saviour's expressions, but rather accord to them, as I before remarked, a greater intensity of meaning. There are two words, which in our English version, are frequently translated hell. One is "Hades," literally the unseen state;

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\* 1 Timothy vi., 3-5.



the other is "Gehenna," literally the valley of Hinnom, which the Jewish writers used as representative of the place of torment. "The name belonged originally and literally to a valley that lay outside of Jerusalem, to the south, and was infamous for the human sacrifices there offered to Moloch. Josiah defiled the place, and, according to a common view, it became a receptacle for all the filth of the city. There the worms revelled, and there a fire was kept constantly burning. Hence it came to be an emblem of hell." It can be no valid objection, if it be urged that as a matter of fact the horrors of the valley of Hinnom were not literally everlasting. Our Saviour unquestionably does give to the figurative Gehenna an endlessness of duration. This cannot be evaded without a gross distortion of His words. This awful word Gehenna occurs eleven times in the Gospels, and once in St. James's epistle, and invariably in connection with the prospective doom of the wicked. Here also bear in mind, that the words of the Saviour were addressed to a people of whom it may be said most of them believed in the immortality of the soul, both of the good and of the bad; they had likewise a knowledge of a future life, and attached more than a local and limited meaning to the threatened punishment of Gehenna. It symbolized to them the deathlessness of the human spirit, and the endlessness of future torment. Justyn Martyr, in addressing Gentile converts, writes; "Gehenna is the place where those are to be punished who have led unrighteous lives, and disbelieved what God declared by Christ." Our Saviour further adds, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." In a figurative form, derived from the sacrificial ritual of Moses, the Saviour teaches us that the lost will be preserved from destruction, and that the instruments of

ment shall be everlasting, and the suffering without end. Speaking of the fate of Judas, the Great Teacher uses this expression, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." Had the traitor's punishment consisted in annihilation, or were a blissful heaven to succeed the penal fires of a temporary retribution, then, contrary to our Lord's declaration, it would have been good for Judas to have been born. On the annihilation theory, he had had an existence with many gratifications, and would easily escape the deserts of wickedness. On the restoration scheme, the sufferings of his existence, even in hell, were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should follow. "An exceeding and eternal weight of glory," succeeding any kind of finite sufferings, would make existence a boon and a rapture. The Saviour's words however are these; "Good were it for that man if he had never been born"; this awful declaration can only be understood as teaching the unending duration of his punishment, and is equally as conclusive against the theory of annihilation as of restoration.

(3.) Thus far I have adduced, as I judge, direct and positive proof of the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. We have agreed that this question cannot be settled on principles of natural reason alone, and that Holy Scripture must be our sovereign and final standard of appeal. For the fulness and frequency of Scriptural authority I must refer you to the Word of God itself, and I cannot but suppose, that, with myself, you will be startled with the array of evidence there found. "It is surely a deeply significant and striking fact that the doctrine of future punishment is distinctly taught no fewer than a hundred and thirty times in the New Testament; and of these, no less than fifty-two instances occur in the Gospel narratives, where expressions



are recorded as employed by Jesus Christ in His personal ministry, descriptive of, or referring to, the woes of the lost in the eternal state. The testimony of the Great Teacher Himself to the doctrine is especially impressive and worthy of profound attention. Fifty-two distinct utterances of it, recorded in the Gospels from His lips, cannot fail to have an intense effect on Christian minds, in establishing a faith of the truth, which adverse reasoning can never dislodge. He, the Lord of light, and love, and righteousness, knows all the mysteries of eternity. He cannot speak a word out of harmony with perfect goodness and rectitude; yet, He, more than any religious teacher who ever appeared on earth, and nearly as often as all His Apostles put together, has declared this doctrine of the reality and eternity of future punishments. Throughout His ministry it is solemn to observe what variety, and force of illustration, and imagery, and warning, and expression, He employs, to clothe the awful truth with power for the conscience and the heart." I would, then, here seriously ask you, can you adduce one positive Scripture to shew that there will be any remission or limitation of the future punishment of such as die in sin and unbelief? Have you one plain Scripture to prove, that the future punishment of the wicked shall not be; or if permitted for a time, longer or shorter, shall eventually be withdrawn? Speculations you may adduce, strong assertions you may employ, and human reason and feeling may indignantly rebel; but what Scripture have you that plainly arrays itself against the mass of explicit revealed testimony for the everlasting duration of future punishment? We have seen that the expressions employed in Scripture to describe everlastingness, in respect to finite things, are used only occasionally instead of being, as is alleged, commonly used. "On carefully examining all the

passages in the Old Testament in which 'everlasting' occurs, I find," says one, "only about six or eight texts where it clearly denotes a limited duration. The expressions 'for ever,' and 'for ever and ever,' are used rather oftener, yet seldom indeed in comparison with their employment in an unlimited sense. Their use in a restricted signification is thus very rare in the Old Testament; and I add this important remark, that they are not employed in the whole New Testament with such a meaning in one single undoubted example." If I could find one explicit passage challenging the eternity of future punishment it would have, I trust, its proper weight upon my mind, but this tenet is enforced by the whole scope and tenor of inspired truth. "Thus saith the Lord" is our authority, and not conjectures and bold assertions, and therefore, the impossibility of one text being found to contradict this solemn belief of "wrath to come," was adduced in my discourse in evidence of the eternity of the punishment of the wicked.

(4.) In furnishing proof of the truth of this doctrine, I insisted on the serious consequences of its denial. It does appear to me to be essential to the harmony and completeness of the other express truths of revelation, perfectly compatible with the Gospel, and with the attributes and procedure of God. Its denial I cannot but view as a depreciation of the purity, veracity, and justice of God.

The removal of this weighty dogma would prove that the Scriptural statements of the heinousness and results of sin are exaggerated and false. The sacred writers uniformly represent sin in the most dreadful light. It is an act of rebellion against the Supreme Majesty of heaven and earth. One deed of transgression has disordered the condition and history of our world. The evil of sin appears to be infinite, (employing that word in its Scriptural



and common meaning,) not only because it is committed against an infinite Being, but because it carries with it an infinite desert as the attack upon infinite law and excellence. I do not say that sin is infinite in reference to man who is a finite creature, but it is infinite in reference to that God—against Whom it is committed,—in reference to the creature's everlasting obligation to love and serve the Monarch of the universe. It required and received for its expiation, in behalf of man, a sacrifice of infinite dignity. When we remember against whom sin is committed, and the penalty and results it incurs, sin becomes infinite. It draws down upon the transgressor the wrath of an infinite Being, and must have an infinite reprobation, for anything short of this, according to natural justice, would not be commensurate with an infinite sin. Then as no punishment can be infinite unless it be also eternal, natural justice itself unites with Scripture in demanding the eternal punishment of the sinner. Annihilationists and restitutionists presumptuously remit the greater portion of the penalty of sin. If its demerit be so great as to require an infinite atonement, can the wilful rejection of this atonement be followed by anything short of everlasting punishment?

The denial of this doctrine introduces confusion into the design of the Gospel. It assumes that a portion of our race may be saved in this life through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ; but it assumes, likewise, that another portion may be restored to God, after rejecting Christ's salvation, and after a reformatory period of misery in hell. This is not only making God's gift of His Son an unnecessary expenditure of Divine love, and annulling the principle of His substitution, but makes a "place farthest removed from God and His heavenly influences, inhab"

by His most accursed enemies, the most effectual school of virtue." It is too late to argue from the liberty and perfections of a perfect Being, after His purposes and plans are authoritatively declared. To say that God may be better than His word, is saying neither more nor less than that His word is not true. To expect blessings and favours from Jesus Christ which are not contained in His covenant, is simply to neglect and renounce His Gospel. Our ignorance and limited capacities on the one hand, and the plain and reiterated statements of Holy Scripture on the other, should restrain us from the denial of the eternity of future misery. "If we saw the proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment; if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us as eternal misery appears dreadful,—something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror,—all objection against this doctrine would vanish at once.\*"

(5.) These were the four main classes of evidence I adduced to prove, that the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent and unbelieving is taught in Holy Scripture. I afterwards proceeded to speak of what they lose, and of what they endure, who enter the "blackness of darkness for ever." In their awful condition of being, there will be the loss of all good, natural and spiritual; eternal separation from God; judicial abandonment to the society of devils; and the positive infliction of suffering; such are some of the particulars on which I spoke touching the tremendous doom of men who neglect duty and forget God. Real inflictions are plainly declared to be the portion of the finally lost, although we may be unable accurately to describe them. Not only will they be driven "into everlasting fire

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\* Jonathan Edwards,



with the devil and his angels," but "punishment" will be awarded them. This I say without at all disputing the assertion, that the most terrible infliction of all will be to be left alone with sin and evil. This indeed may be the most fearful form that future misery can assume. You are aware how Christian men, who take the same side with myself of this dismal question, are exposed to the most offensive epithets, and are charged with teaching the fear of punishment rather than the fear of sin. This is one of the charges more easily alleged than proved, for no intelligent writer or speaker on this theme would overlook the terribleness of transgression as discoverable in this life. But in addition, God's Word plainly refers to future consequences, and fidelity to Scripture warning necessitates direct reference to these consequences. Bitter compunctions of conscience, companionship with malicious spirits, a condition of existence in which evil will be rampant, and from which every avenue of escape will be closed, and every ray of hope excluded; these are among the representations which the Scriptures give us of "the bitter pains of eternal death." The wealth of privilege on earth neglected and despised, with the full play of memory, and self-accusation, and gnawing regret; all go to prove that the state of the lost is a real existence, and one of penal suffering. And do remember I pray you, that the same loving and righteous God, who offers heaven and pleads with us for our acceptance of it, warns us of hell, and by the tenderness and urgency He employs, leaves us without excuse if we die unprepared for the life to come.

ALIQUIS. Allow me to interrupt you for a moment, and again inquire, do not the symbols "fire," "unquenchable fire," "the smoke of their torment," and similar, appear quite at variance with perpetual continuance in being? Such language is s

to taste and so harrowing that I must ask you, does not this burning up, and never-quenched fire, suggest that it is the place that will continue, and not the miserable victims driven there?

NEMO. We have agreed that positive rewards will accrue to the righteous in the heavenly world, but the assurance of these rewards is given us to a great extent in metaphors and figures, nor are they less real on that account. "Pearly gates," "the sea of glass," "thrones" and "crowns," are among the images of celestial honour and felicity. To separate the figure from the fact, the emblematic from the real, in the representations of the destiny both of the righteous and unrighteous, is very difficult, and perhaps in some cases impossible, but the truth indicated is obvious. With respect to the actual inflictions in the world of sorrow, as I have stated before, the symbols employed are designed to adumbrate the intensity of punishment, for as fire imparts excruciating pain to the human frame, so is it metaphorically used by the sacred writers to shadow forth more dreadful sufferings. Indeed, it cannot be disproved that there is not a literal fire. May not the wicked, like the bush on mount Horeb, which, though burning, was not consumed, by a supernatural provision, be made to exist in fire for ever? The same Mighty God can establish sinners for correction,\* who once preserved His servants in the flame of a fiery furnace. Such notions as these are more easily scoffed at and ridiculed than disproved. But I will not press this. The worm that never dies may be the self-accusation of the heart; the fire that is not quenched, the eagerness with which perverse desires are cherished. The worm may be reflection, the fire remorse. Incited passions, bitter memories, painful associations, and mutual re-

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\* Habakkuk i., 12,



cognitions, may be among the penalties awarded. Instead of treating these solemn expressions with the flippancy that I have noticed in the writings of some who take your side of this grave inquiry, I should deem it wiser and more modest to hold by the literal signification of the words used by the Saviour and His Apostles, and reverently believe with the great Augustine, that "living creatures may even exist in fire without being wasted, and in pain without death, by the Almighty power of God."

ALIIQUIS. Do I understand you to mean, that all who die impenitent sinners will have equally and alike the inflictions of everlasting punishment?

NEMO. Certainly not, since Scripture teaches us that while the sufferings will be absolutely endless, they will be of various gradations. There are degrees of guilt, one sin being more heinous than another, and Holy Writ affirms that punishment will be proportionably varied. We know not indeed how this will be, but are safe in assuming that it will be arranged on principles of perfect equity. There is a difference between the guilt of a heathen, and of a Jew; between a Jew and Christian; and likewise between one man and another in the same Christian era and neighbourhood. The Bible informs us that there are degrees, both of reward and punishment, in the two states of existence after death. Degrees of reprobation may be disputed, may even be affirmed to be impossible, —yet can it only be a creature's impossibility, while with God no shadow of difficulty may present itself, as such passages as the following indicate.—"And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the Day of Judgment, than thee."

thee." "That servant which knew his master's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes, but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they ask the more." "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

ALIQUIS. Now, remembering the palpable moral differences between man and man, admitting, as I am sure you will, that these differences graduate through every shade, from utter depravity to moral amiabilities and loveliness; instead of including all in one eternal doom of condemnation, with the variations of sufferings to which you have referred, rather, I say, than accept this, I should assent to the purgatorial scheme, and embrace the doctrine that if punishment in the future world exist at all, it must be of a limited duration, of a purificatory character, and regulated by the amount of human criminality. "Looking broadly on the vast population of the earth, and on the darkness of vice amidst which, without fault of theirs, millions of our race live and die, the conviction forces itself upon us, that in their case, so far as this world is concerned, probation is a name and no more. If they are to be tried at all, in any real sense, it must be after death, and in another state of existence.\*"

NEMO. I readily concede, there are great and perplexing difficulties in believing in one scene of probation, but we are not required by these difficulties to impeach the justice of God in His dealings

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\* "The Creator and the Creation," by John Young, LL.D., p. 285.



with men. If any moral beings on earth have had *no real trial*, they cannot be justly punished in another world at all, but we must not argue from our ignorance, and attack the character and arrangements of the "Only Wise God." The difficulties of man's probationary existence have led some to suppose, that no time can be fixed as to the end of his disciplinary trial. In some instances there is the fact of apparent defective opportunities, in others overwhelming temptations, in all, so much evil mixed with good, that eternal misery resulting from our life on earth, seems hard to credit; nevertheless, these are the conditions of our earthly existence, arranged for us by an infinitely compassionate Sovereign and Father. As far as you and I are concerned, and also the beings with whom we are acquainted, by the proper use of our powers and privileges, life may be turned to a high and blessed account. As for others, in former ages, and in different climes, the enquiry of Scripture may be urged; "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Ever remember we are creatures, and that mystery and difficulty necessarily belong to our relation to the Infinite Sovereign of the universe. Mystery and difficulty impose upon us salutary and bracing exercises of intellect and heart, which cannot fail to suggest that imperious and sweeping words on the Divine government, are as insulting to our Creator, as they are unworthy our nature and capacities.

The merits of the hypothesis of purgatory arise from the humane intentions its framers have had of relieving the mysteries of our probationary existence, the idea probably being borrowed from the beautiful fable by Socrates, in Plato's "Phædo." The design of this conjectural state, is, not indeed that the impenitent sinner shall be saved, but it is a state in which the most imperfect penitent may be

trained to that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." In authorized words; "it is that place in which after death, are purified the souls of those persons who were not fully cleansed on earth, in order that they may be prepared for heaven, wherein nothing shall enter that defileth.\*" But, we may ask, if the penitent and sincere are forgiven in this life, what need, in their case, can there be of a purgatorial discipline? Forgiveness includes adoption into God's family, and will secure their fitness for heaven. In the case of others who have not sought and obtained Divine forgiveness, Scripture clearly tells us there is none to be found after death. I will not insist on the fact at length, that this dream of purgatory relieves no difficulty in our probation, nor on the doctrine of never-ending punishment, but warn you, in sound words, it is "vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." The passages quoted in its assumed favour are pretences, and shew that the doctrine lacks the help even of probability. I cannot find one Scripture which speaks of the retributive punishment of futurity as remedial and expiatory. To affirm there will be any improvement in the moral character of such as die unprepared for heaven, is to extend the probationary state into the other world, directly tending to undermine the arrangements, motives, and appeals of the Christian religion on earth. There can be no reason for concluding that the wicked heart which has here resisted a thousand calls to repentance and self-denial, will be subdued and sanctified by the endurance of God's judgment hereafter.

"Vows made in pain, how soon would ease recant.†" Assuming the possibility of a second

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\* Bellarmine.

† Milton.



probation, where would be the equity of it? Let the most imperfect penitent know that there is the probability of salvation beyond the limits of this present life, and thereby you encourage him to postpone duty, and neglect the offers of grace on earth. Then if there are two probations, why not many? Such passages as the following can have only one meaning; "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The plain sense of these words is, that at a certain season, the character and situation of the evil and of the good will be finally and irreversibly fixed; that repentance will be hid from the eyes of the former, and that the latter will be beyond the reach of sorrow and death. "What is the hope of the hypocrite," inquires Job, "when God taketh away his soul?" What, truly, unless Gehenna be deemed a more effective teacher than the Gospel of Christ, and the agency of the Holy Ghost? The scheme of a protraction of proportionable and curative pain, in another state of being, is a fiction which the simplicity of Scripture teaching at once explodes.

On that other point, that some sinners, although not penitent can scarcely be deserving of everlasting wrath, especially when compared with atrocious transgressors, we must remember we have no means of determining the character of sin in the sight of God, except as it is revealed to us in His own Word. Here of course Divine truth must be our standard and guide. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart," and what appears in human sight amiability, may in the eye of Omniscience, be as "a cage of unclean birds." "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." What does

the following Scripture mean? "For whoso shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." These and similar declarations should make us pause ere we associate trivialty with sin, either actual transgression or the sin of omission, and ere we adopt a corrective and disciplinary scheme, which tends to substitute a personal atonement for the atonement of Christ, which gives a moral efficacy to mere pain, and lessens the necessity of Christian vigilance in this life, in the vain hope of making our "calling and election sure" in another. With God's truth before us our plain duty is, not to leave to the fancies of an imaginary future any work, either on behalf of the penitent or impenitent. "If the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be." Then such words as these are very weighty, "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked he shall not fall therein in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth."

ALIQUIS. Do you think that after the Day of Judgment, when time merges into eternity, God will allow any creature to live who does not live to His glory?

NEMO. I gather from this question that your belief is the fallen angels will be annihilated at the end of time. I suppose you mean further, that if their existence be still permitted, it will not be for the glory of God? We have however no information from Scripture that they will cease to be after Judgment. Why have they been permitted to live so long already? That the wicked who leave earth impenitent and unforgiven will not be annihilated, is the clear teaching of those numerous Scriptures



which have been again and again referred to in our conversations. How can you tell, or what ground have you for surmising, that the existence in penal servitude of fallen angels and lost men, is not for the glory of God? I would ask, may there not be by the fact of there being a place of torment in the universe, a vindication of God's government and justice and power? Lessons and warnings from this dismal region may be proclaimed to the intelligences of all worlds. If the Bible affirm that these fallen beings will continue in existence for evermore, we may leave the rest, for assuredly what God determines will be for His own glory, and for the well-being of His universal family.

ALIQUIS. Pray pardon me for again asking, that since the word "destruction" is so very frequently employed in Scripture in relation to the doom of the wicked, would it not in every way be more consistent with reason, and with our highest knowledge of God's character, to conclude that wicked men will be literally destroyed, or cease to be, in hell? This view of future punishment appears more consonant with the general form of threatening employed in the Bible, and is likewise more accordant with perfect benevolence. I prefer, as I have remarked, the theory of restoration, but the annihilationist's theory I can more easily adopt, than your frightful alternative of everlasting punishment.

NEMO. As I have already said, I can only repeat, the "destruction" of the wicked does not mean the annihilation of the wicked. Destruction, and to destroy, are words in our English version often used to translate Greek words which do not refer to cessation of being. Mark the following passage, "But they had heard only that he which persecuted us in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed;" or this, "For if I build again

the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." The translators of the English Bible were masters of their own tongue, and often employed the word "destruction" without intending to imply extermination or cessation of being, which proves that the word is not always used in Scripture for annihilation. The unclean spirit cried out in the presence of the Saviour with a loud voice, "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us?" By referring to the parallel passages we learn what is meant by the "destruction" of a spirit. In St. Matthew's Gospel we read; "The devils cried out what have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" In St. Luke's gospel we read; "The devils besought Him that he would not command them to go out into the deep;" that is, into the bottomless pit. Here the demons attached to the term destroy, "tormented before the time," and being "sent away into the bottomless pit." Surely then "destruction" does not always mean annihilation, or ceasing to be. I am also quite ready to leave the explanation of the original terms to lexicographers. "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." In this passage no one who regards the context can suppose that "destruction" means obliteration of being, but rather the abode of hell where the wicked are in everlasting punishment. In the book of Proverbs we read; "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them;" does it mean annihilate them in our streets, and exterminate them from the use of ungodly gain? Where the "destruction" is spoken of as future, it cannot mean blotting out of existence. It is a thing threatened, and is described in words that imply conscious suffering. Men are to be punished with it; they are to suffer it; they are to go away



into its endurance; and does not this mean banishment from the presence of God into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels? "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy;" how pointless this warning on the assumption that "destruction" means, at the hour of death, or, at the Day of Judgment, utter extinction of being.

Let me say a word or two further on the point you have again raised, since I am aware of the great use made of the word "destruction" in this controversy, and of its assumed identification with nonentity of being. If utter annihilation of existence be the portion of all sinners, then all however unequal their guilt, would be equally treated. The most outrageous and defiant transgressor would be no more punished than his far less guilty brother. Then how comes it to be imagined, that He who never annihilates the least particle of matter, as our fastest knowledge testifies, should obliterate the existence of a creature gifted, as all will allow, with a capacity for interminable life? The grandest work of Deity dashed to the ground, and, judging from man's capabilities, the design of the Creator defeated. And why? The alleged reason being in order to meet the consequences of man's conduct, who has plunged himself into misery by persistently breaking the laws of his Sovereign. These wicked servants have compelled their Lord to frustrate His own purposes, and by creating moral difficulties cheat Him of control over them in any futurity of existence! This is tempting the creature to say, I will be awfully wicked, and by entailing upon myself the necessity of annihilation, rob my Creator of His rule over me in what they call eternity. Divine justice exhausted and baffled finds the extermination of the offender its only resource! To such weak and unworthy issues are

men driven when they contradict the designs of Infinite Wisdom. In the punishment of the wilful and persistent offender, of which only we are speaking, justice and law are vindicated, and moral perfections honoured; while instruction and warning are announced to all. On the theory of the annihilationists there is merely the putting forth of violent power, the government of God Himself becoming marked by the obliteration of existences. This theory is adopted for this reason among others; it is supposed to bring the fact of sin to an end in the universe. But to say nothing of the encouragement it gives to the commission of sin on earth, we must leave the difficulties of the future to the wise and holy government of God. What we know not now we shall know hereafter. We may ask many questions to which no replies will be vouchsafed. We may ask, why is there evil at all? Why have there ever been in any region wicked beings? Such inquiries are beyond us. Let us rest in Revelation, sheltering our souls under the shadow of the Almighty. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne."

ALIIQUIS. Of late I have been taught there is great misapprehension in the acceptance of the Scripture words "life" and "death." I know we have referred to this subject before, but I desire something more definite. Is not the meaning of "death" in the Bible cessation of being? Is not future existence in heaven alone worthy of the designation "life"? Since the reward of the righteous is life eternal, the desert of the wicked is death, that is, destruction from the presence of the Lord. Then will it not follow that as "life" signifies the blessedness of the righteous, as in the text you discoursed from, so "death" must be non-existence?



NEMO. It is true these two terms pervade the Holy Scriptures. They have probably been selected to denote the highest conceivable issues of earthly conduct in a future world, since they signify the greatest natural good or evil in this. Life is of all things most dear, and, as the Stagyrice tells us, "death, of all fearful things, is the most fearful." I will however confidently assert, that in the New Testament Scriptures these terms are generally used in a figurative sense to describe spiritual states of which the soul alone is capable. Death is predicated of men still living on earth, and life ascribed to others as something additional to their natural existence. That life in Scripture language is not dependent upon common life, nor Scripture death upon physical death, but is something distinct from it, is evident from such passages as these. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." In these passages and in many more, life denotes a present moral state during existence upon earth. "Ye have no life in you," said our Saviour, in tones of rebuke to some of His hearers; but according to your theory He meant you do not breathe, you do not exist. "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;" do you surmise that before their quickening the Ephesians were destitute of a natural and intellectual existence? Is it not clear that these terms "life" and "death" must be taken in a spiritual sense, the context being our main guide to their precise import in the passages where they occur? To lose the image of God is to die, for as death destroys the human frame, sin destroys truth, holiness, and love, the features of the image of God, in which man was created. So

the wicked are said to be dead in sin, as is the condemned malefactor in the eye of human law; dead to holiness, as is the man whose muscles are paralyzed to physical activity; dead to happiness, though rioting in sinful pleasures. So religion in the soul is spiritual life, in addition to natural life, beginning at regeneration, and progressing unto the life in heaven, where will be realized an enriched and ennobled immortality. As I have said before, eternal life in its first instalment commences in the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and always before death. The phrases in Scripture, "death of sin," and "life of righteousness," you cannot but understand to denote a spiritual state or character before God. The word "life" in the Bible, does at times, denote the life men live on earth, even a physical and unspiritual one; but especially in the New Testament it bears a deeper meaning, and denotes a special blessing given to all who believe. The word "death" also in the sacred page often denotes dissolution and cessation of being, but you know how frequently it is employed in a metaphorical sense to describe a state the opposite to spiritual or religious life. As a rule, however, and particularly is this applicable to the New Testament, both these terms must be taken as having a spiritual rather than a literal meaning.

When, therefore, "death" is applied to the condition of the wicked in the future world, it does not imply non-existence, but a deprivation of that which renders existence a blessing. They who are overtaken with everlasting destruction are punished in it, by living in separation from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. That Christ is the "life" of His people, that "life" follows "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," are great and precious truths. All spiritual life in time, as all felicitous life in eternity, is derived from



union with Him. This "life" is but another word for salvation, forgiveness of sins, peace with God, an influential principle in the heart of sanctifying grace; but this gracious truth is pressed into a service it was not designed to aid. It is argued from defective premises, that since Christ is the "life" of His people, all must be annihilated at death who are destitute of it. We are told that man is naturally mortal, body and soul, that when Adam was threatened with death as the penalty of sin, he could not possibly understand it to mean eternal life in misery, and that we are to be guided by what our first parent understood by death. In these statements there is a mixture of truth and error. Christ is undeniably the spiritual life of a Christian believer; but this Christian's neighbour lives, although he is no believer in Christ. He lives, though destitute of spiritual and divine life. And if this unbeliever pass out of time without an interest in Christ, he continues to live, unless indeed you demonstrate the non-immortality of the human soul. Presumptions are in favour of the immortality of man, apart from Scripture evidence, and it will be your work to shew that these presumptions are groundless and unreasonable.

ALIQUIS. Your belief is, then, that evil will exist for ever? You suppose there will be intelligences deepening in sin, and hate, and despair for ever, growing in unending torments darker and fiercer against God! Is this the overthrow of evil? Is this the triumph of good, and the result of the magnificent scheme of redemption? More easily, I must continue to avow, can I adopt the repulsive theory of annihilation than such an ignominious defeat of Divine love and power. This doctrine of eternal evil is totally at variance with any reasonable understanding of the predicated reconciliation of all things to God by Christ, and of that kindred truth, that in Christ all things consist.

NEMO. The proper reply to your observations is, "What saith the Scripture?" We have admitted that creatureship involves mystery and perplexity. If our Saviour has committed Himself to the doctrine of the eternity of evil, we may be spared mental distress and indignant declamation. In this liberalizing age the representations of God's character are mostly on the side of compassion, and tenderness, and mercy; but is there not another side, even power, justice, holiness, rectitude? There is law as well as love in the Gospel. God is our Judge, as well as Creator. It is often said, this doctrine is of human invention, but as far as we can understand words in their honest acceptation, we must claim for it the proclamation and enforcement of God's revealed truth. Your way of stating the case is one that is popular I know, and since it appears agreeable to human reason, is assumed to be true. But is the creature more pure and benevolent than his Creator? In many quarters man's idea of a conquest over evil is accepted as nobler and more beneficent than the Divine plan. I would regard with the greatest respect the sentiments and pleadings of those who sigh for light and relief on the oppressive difficulties of this solemn verity, for I can truly say I never think or speak of it without trembling; but man must not put himself in the place of his Maker, nor his reason above Revelation. The schemes which have been propounded to get rid of the eternity of evil are built on assumptions. The plainest language of Scripture is tortured to support a theory, and for one I have found no kind of relief in human hypothesis and indignant assertions. In creation and providence we find exhibitions which do not appear to harmonize with infinite wisdom and goodness. In ordinary life we occasionally notice that God permits misery to follow from the faults of men in what may seem



a disproportionate degree. It is not possible however to argue from our own limited conceptions of what the justice or goodness of God can require in His universal administration. How cautiously ought we to speak of that desert or retribution which ought to be measured out to transgression and disobedience against an infinite Lawgiver. The ends and uses of eternal punishment may be, for anything we know to the contrary, of the highest conceivable importance in the moral universe. From plain statements in God's word, it is more than a conjecture to affirm that such is the case.

Remember here, that God's goodness and justice are not defeated, if their authority be maintained. The infinite dignity and illimitable grace of the Gospel are not frustrated, if its asseverations and sanctions are enforced. When disobeyed and rejected, Christianity possesses the alternative of self-vindication. "The wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder of that wrath He shall restrain." There is no defeat in this. If the gospel had decreed the salvation of all men, irrespective of means and conditions, then the ruin of any would have been a failure. Only this would have been "another gospel," not "our Gospel." The Christian scheme is a reign, as well as a redemption, and in its movements of grace among men, while unto some "the savour of life unto life," may be unto others the "savour of death unto death." And from the classical allusion of this passage, you know what a meaning must be attached to these words. The notion of a universal restoration, the dream that every prodigal convinced at last, in "the furnace of future probation" of his folly, will return to the bosom of his Father; such teaching is directly at variance with Scripture that admonishes us that when all enemies are put under Christ's feet, it is only preparatory to their dismissal to a direful

conscious and changeless state of existence. I need not refer you to the virgins, shut out from the marriage; to the man destitute of the wedding garment, banished into outer darkness; to servants who knew their Lord's will, and prepared not themselves, having assigned to them a portion with the lost. How this definite teaching is sustained by such declarations as this, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." You say the wrath of God only abides on him on earth, and yet this unbeliever while on earth is in great prosperity, and apparently great enjoyment. The "wrath" must be more than punishment in this mortal life, and is the antithesis of everlasting life. You further say, the wrath of God will not abide on him for ever, since he will be annihilated, or eventually restored; to such a statement I must still reply, this cannot be proved from "the true sayings of God." The Bible is absolutely silent on the existence of any ulterior restorative Gospel benefits in the world beyond the grave, and is as silent on the notion of cessation of being.

ALIQUIS. "The wish that no life may fail beyond the grave," comes, as the poet has told us, from what we have that is likest God within the soul, and presumably is an instinct or desire not likely to be disappointed. On your representations, we are not that I can see, Christians who believe in perfect good, but rather manichæans who believe in two rulers who divide the universe between them, in which the evil ruler is barely kept down by the power of the good ruler. "Where is the attraction and inspiration of such a melancholy faith? What comfort is it to me if I am saved, while one half of the world is lost? What blessedness can I have in heaven, if my brethren are in hell? It is no



heaven to me; I have no union of spirit with its God; I feel as the old warrior felt when he came to baptism; "Where are my ancestors?" "In hell for ever," said the priest. "Then I prefer to join them." His answer has been recorded as an impiety, but for all that, most men have sympathized with it, and felt as I feel, that the Spirit of Christ was more in that man than in the priest who stood beside him."

NEMO. I recognize there an extract from a sermon which I was sorry to read, as having been preached by an ordained minister of the Protestant church in this country. The sentiment or doctrine of such teaching is human enough, intensely human, and very acceptable to human nature, however destitute of good in its action on that nature. In such preaching the sharper and sterner features of the Gospel are not only evaded, but contradicted; the discrimination of different classes of character—oh! how contrary to the teaching of the New Testament—avoided, and self-flattering notions substituted for "the truth as it is in Jesus." We have settled the underlying and all-important admission of the Divine Inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Assuming this, then, our appeal must be to them, and not to mere human sentiment and imagination. The most like God in the human soul, will be that which is most in accordance with God's Word. This Word must be our standard as to what is most like God, and whatever thought or judgment in the human soul contravenes its statements, is not at all like God.

Of course the priest here referred to may never have existed, or may be offensively represented; if the statement however be true, he was a priest on whom Christianity directly frowns; and as for the old warrior, the best we can say of him perhaps is, if he ever uttered such words, he had been miserably taught. The other portion of the extract

of the sermon may be designated, a mere caricature of the spirit and doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. He is not the wisest and purest of our race who parades his feelings, and dogmatizes his own speculations. It is a greater thing to walk the sea of mysteries, than to sink aspersing the Christian system, and be wrecked with doubts. Since Peter was bidden by Christ to come out of the ship and tread the waves, he was safe enough, and his obedience made him great; but when he began to disbelieve and theorize he sank. In God's Word we are bidden to abide by mysteries. Who can account for the origin and malignity of sin? Who can understand the exceeding turpitude of that evil to expiate which God spared not His own Son? The permission of moral evil distresses the most masculine minds, quite as much as this affecting mystery of its everlasting punishment. There is that overwhelming fact of the Incarnation, and that of the Resurrection of the body, and that of the Divine Atonement. How immeasurably these truths surpass the compass of the human understanding. On these high matters how wise it is to trust to Revelation, rather than to man's reason and theories. Do not dash yourself against the rock of mysteries. Do not abandon yourself to indifference and scepticism as if life had no help, and the human intellect no relief. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments."

Allow me to read you an extract from Archer Butler's sermon on "The Daily Self-denial of Christ;" a sermon as you may know of special excellence. "The ultimate facts of the Bible and of the reason, for the Bible is but the perfection of reason, are the existence in God's universe of good and evil, with happiness and misery as belonging respectively to each. Under these all grasping titles we may



class everything; but once arrived at them we can go no further. We can neither explain them in the world, nor can we explain them away from it; we can neither unravel them nor remove them. There they are, certain but impenetrable;—"High as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" But though we cannot tell all about them, though we cannot "pluck out the heart of their mystery," yet by the light of Scripture and of reason, we can gather a good deal of their mutual bearings and relations. We can see that while they are utter and irreconcilable antagonists, they are, in a marvellous manner, connected and reciprocally operative, the darker element of evil and misery ministering in a wondrous way to the brighter principle of good; a plain proof I may observe, against those manichæan notions of rival principles of equal dignity, once so prevalent as an admitted heresy, and still, I fear, floating unacknowledged in many an imbittered mind, as the practical creed of disappointment and impenitence. The more we reflect, the more clearly we come to see that the reins of empire are really held by a single Sovereign, who, blessed be His august Name! is assuredly engaged on the side of moral purity and happiness. But being such, no doubt He must hate and reject, from the inmost depths of His everlasting nature, that accursed principle, which, by the voluntary agency of certain of His rebellious creatures, perverting the freedom of action which was given to make their worship worthy of His throne, has been so long intruded upon His fair creation; He must abhor it alike in itself and in that gloomy retinue of misery which by inevitable necessity has entered with it, and with it for ever dwells."

ALIQUIS. You would not condemn a thoughtful and reverent attempt to relieve the apparent sternness

of Divine threatenings, and thus impart alleviation to distressed minds on this dark and terrible doctrine of the future Wrath of God?

NEMO. Such attempts are deserving of commendation, and for one I would give them my best consideration. I have to some extent read what wise and good men have written on this subject, and although their views have in some instances been very different from my own, I have, I trust, honestly weighed their writings. As a rule, I must however acknowledge, I have been driven back from human reasonings and assertions to the plain statements of God's Word, as the only satisfactory ground to rest upon. If the Bible, as a Divine Revelation, could be superseded by the theories and explanations of men, we might be more influenced by the writers to whom you refer, but we both believe in its divinity, its definiteness, and its abiding authority, and therefore every suggestion must be tested by its teaching.

ALIQUIS. I have recently been reading Mr. Birks's "Letters to an Inquirer," and was much interested in his views. His volume, "The Victory of Divine Goodness;" and Dr. Young's "The Creator and the Creation, How Related?" are books on which I should be obliged for your judgment, since I presume you have read them.

NEMO. Let us look at Mr. Birks's volume as far as it bears on future punishment. The fifth letter of the series unfolds more particularly his views on this subject. It suggests a modification of the doctrine of eternal suffering most strange, and to my own mind, forced and unwarranted. Here he says; "nothing can be more positively laid down by our Lord, than that the reward of Heaven and the punishment of hell are eternal, and strange warnings of judgment to come pervade almost every



page of the Word of God." The direct and repeated statements of Scripture compel this writer to admit the doctrine of eternal punishment. My own belief he expresses in words as clear as can be desired. He distinctly avows that the doctrine of the eternity of punishment is found in the Sacred Volume. Afterwards he begins to theorize, and conjectures that punishment will be awarded to sinners in another world, but after a time they will be restored to God, brought into ultimate fellowship with eternal love, and the universe purged of all traces of sin and sorrow. For myself, I must say, I find not a hint in the Word of God that encourages the theory, that fallen human intelligences will be recovered by any gradual and eventual salvation. Of partial or universal restoration after death I read not a word. But to proceed with the writer; "A 'perfect love' seems to imply a sincere desire for the happiness of every conscious and intelligent creature, and a 'perfect victory of Almighty love' that this desire should not fail through the strength of evil, but be at length fulfilled." Mark the assumption, "It seems"; to which we reply, "what saith the Scripture?" Are we to attach more importance to what *may seem* to be truth to this writer, than to declarations of God's Word? "It seems" is the starting point in many a scheme that runs counter to orthodoxy and Revealed truth. This fancy then, beginning with "it seems," is put in contrast with what is positively laid down by our Lord, and inferences are deduced and dilated upon to teach, that the positive instruction of the New Testament is not to be accepted in its obvious and legitimate sense.

Here is another sentence. "If the doom of lost souls involves an unwilling acknowledgment of God's justice in their own sentence, must it not also imply a *compulsory* but real perception of all the

other attributes of the Almighty? Must not the contemplation of infinite wisdom and love, however solemn the punishment and the compulsion by which alone it is made possible for those who have despised their day of grace, be still, in its own nature, unutterably blessed? The personal loss and ruin may be complete and irreparable, the anguish intense, the shame and sorrow dreadful, the humiliation infinite and irreversible. Yet out of its depths there *may* arise such a passive but real view of the joys of a ransomed universe, and of the unveiled perfections of the Godhead, as to fulfil, even here, in a strange, mysterious way, the predicted office of the Redeemer of souls, and to swallow up death in victory." What a dream is this! What conclusions from rash assumptions! The *compulsory* contemplation of infinite beauty, and wisdom, and love, is to be the agency by which after death lost souls shall be "raised into a trance of holy adoration," and changed from evil to good. But where is the authority for this compulsory contemplation of a transforming vision? Do we not read of the lost, being excluded from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power, and shut up in blackness and darkness for ever? This writer tells us there is to be an inferior Paradise, or Gehenna, in which the wicked and unsaved in this life will find a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. What strange fancies have sometimes captivated men of whom better things might have been augured; abandoning the Word of God as our guide, what protection can men have against bewildering theories? This excellent clergyman admits that the Word of God is silent on the view which has fascinated him, but presuming it a likelihood, he goes on to argue that the presence of infinite and attractive goodness will overcome evil, and secure the desired "victory." Dr. Young, in his book, has a some-



what similar groundless notion. He supposes that "the furnace of future probation," as he terms it, shall illuminate and purify, and that they who have failed to see truth under Gospel light, and to acquire holiness through Gospel grace, shall attain to both in another state, and "abandon sin for ever, and throw themselves at the feet of God."\*

May I not appeal to you and inquire, is this the reasoning you can accept as satisfactory on the momentous question before us? Here are only assertions, not matured results of Scripture criticism. And in such views as these there is little originality, for both Mr. Birks and Dr. Young traverse ground familiar to the readers of Origen, Winchester, Estlin, Stonehouse, Alger, and others. All these writers proceed on the assumption that after this life expedients and resources of Divine goodness *may* be employed, quite as unexpected as the Incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God were after the fall of man. The question, however, is not what is conceivable by us, but what are the revelations of the future state of the lost in that Book whose words "are true and righteous altogether." On the simplest principles of interpretation I aver, that the Book of God gives not the remotest encouragement to such wild fancies. We are shut up to this conclusion, that the Gospel is a universal remedy for all in this life who will penitently receive it, but will never in another life benefit the finally wilful and disobedient. For those who sin against its grace and overtures there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. How do we know that in the far future lost souls will be "pierced with the intense conviction of the enormity of sin on the one side, and the ravishing sweetness and glory of goodness on the other side"? All this is mere hypothesis. In short, the impossibility of

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\* "Creator and Creation," p. 287.

eternal punishment will only be proved when it is shewn, that a free agent cannot continue eternally in sin. To continue in sin, however, appears to me to be a leading element in the punishment of the lost; since, I venture to think, it has more of what is negative, than of what is positive in it. All blissful communion is withheld, and God exhibits Himself in the terrible glories of His justice. It is not a matter of choice in Deity, whether the wicked shall be punished or not, it is not an arbitrary determination in Him, but an act of that justice which necessarily emanates from His perfections.

To divest God of a deep and endless aversion to sin, would only be to reduce the Divine Mind to a lower moral level than the human. No man even can ever be indifferent to sin. To speak of the positive wrath being unworthy of God, appears to me plainly to challenge the Dignity of the Divine Nature. If God love the righteous, He must have aversion and displeasure against the unrighteous. His wrath is never a mere agitation, and is distinguishable from ours in its being clear of sin; but is ever a self-determination against objective evil in the creature affecting His mind and law. "It is the energy of an outraged love which cannot but assert itself." Or as another has described it; "It is the actualising of holiness;" "the energy of His Will evoked by opposition." The Biblical representation of the Divine wrath teaches that it is not opposed to, but contained in, Divine Love, and that it must be held in relation both to the holiness as well as to the jealousy of God.\* Scripture tells us that God is angry with us, because He loves us, and that it is His Love which makes Him feel our enmities, and concern Himself about our rebellions, and that prosecutes the neglect or

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\* Isaiah x., 17; Joshua xxiv., 19; Revelation xvi., 7-9.



denial of His supreme claims. Thus, from the Nature of God, I cannot but see, in reference to wicked and impenitent men, the necessity of an eternal and judicial condemnation.

ALIQUIS. These are certainly fanciful conjectures in Mr. Birks's book. But I will ask you, is not the Gospel a scheme of universal salvation? Is not its purpose one of illimitable and unfettered benevolence? and shall not Christ reconcile all things unto Himself? God being the Saviour of all men, and especially of them who believe, must He not be, in some efficient sense, the Saviour of those who do not believe? Therefore whatever doom or punishment awaits them in another life, it cannot be a never-ending one, for we seem bound, both by reason and revelation, to regard God as a Saviour, and not a destroyer. Or, in Dr. Young's words; "That after death, impenitence unsubdued here shall and must hereafter meet with its righteous desert, and that, in another state, this righteous desert of sin shall be prolonged until its cause is for ever extirpated."

NEMO. We are still in the circle in which we have been moving for some time. It is my turn I think to ask some questions. If the revealed appliances of the Gospel for man's salvation fail in this world, how can they be brought to bear with greater effectiveness in the world to come? What are the reasons of a greater chance of salvation in the future life than the present one? If in the future a soul may through its own endurance of penalty, escape the endless consequences of transgression, how can the necessity for the atonement of Christ be shewn? Then I must still press the inquiry, where is there to be found one statement of Scripture, intimating that the provisions of the Gospel will be continued to the impenitent beyond the hour of death? As a believer in the

Divine authority and sufficiency of Holy Scripture, I have a right to ask you, how these things can be? I do think that with myself, you will be tired of "bold assertion," of "rash speculation," of "groundless inferences." What has struck me as remarkable and painful, in Dr. Young's book, for instance, is the attempt, by a professedly Christian writer, to settle a doctrine of pure Revelation without seriously referring to its statements. On one or two passages you will find a superficial criticism which appears on so grave a subject, like trifling with the Divine Word. What is the value of the possession of the Divine oracles, if their decisions are not to be consulted and accepted?

Since Christ died for all men, it is forthwith assumed, that the salvation of all men is certain, and results are predicated which the perfect generosity and grace of the Gospel cannot be shewn to justify. The great and good Ruler, we are told, has entered into a battle with evil, and the war will end, not when the victims of sin are damned or destroyed, but when the evil in them is consumed, and all things reconciled unto the Father. If one soul perish for ever it is, they tell us, a failure, and evil has won the day. They despair not of the darkest and vilest members of the human race, no, not even if they have made palpable their darkness and vileness in the midst of Christian light and remonstrance, since after all they are children of God's family, and shall assuredly be saved! According to this teaching it will matter very little in the long run, whether obedience or disobedience has marked a man's life, whether he has been a devoted, earnest, and self-denying labourer in God's vineyard; or a proud, miserly, and selfish loiterer; whether he die a martyr for God's truth, or die cursing his Maker, after an existence spent in endeavours to spread error and evil; it matters



little in the long run, since this enemy of God and man will not be lost, he too shall eventually join the assembly of the loyal and the holy in the "life to come!" These are notions very popular in the present day, very flattering and influential. But instead of being in harmony with the Gospel, they subvert its essential verities, and aim to turn to nought its plainest admonitions and appeals. A blessed truth it is that Christ died for the ungodly, but He died that they might be saved from their ungodliness, not saved while they indulged its love and practice, rejecting to the end of life the Saviour's mediation. Many confound redemption and salvation, as meaning the same thing, or as differing only in some unimportant particulars. But redemption only makes salvation possible, it does not, unless there be repentance, and faith, and holy life, make salvation certain. We are told however that there is salvation not only for those who are willing to accept it, but for all men universally, whether they desire it or not. In that great Scripture which our Lord gave to Nicodemus, the universal remedy of the Gospel is announced; "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, there is a universal remedy provided, but what is this perishing to which they are subject who do not believe? On this theory of universalism, the curse of the law means no curse in reality, perishing has no meaning, and the mediation of Christ becomes unnecessary and inexplicable. What signification would you attach to the word "perish" in the above Scripture? If it be annihilation, it cannot be restoration; if it be restoration, it cannot be perishing; or if men have immortality only in Christ, and it be peculiar to the regenerate, then it appears on such a theory, there is nothing in the unregenerate man that *can waste or perish.*

ALIQUIS. I must acknowledge, notwithstanding, that many of Dr. Young's remarks on universal restoration, afforded me instruction and hope on this dark subject. Other texts he quotes, but I will particularly refer to this; "It pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell;" . . . . . "by Him (Christ) to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven." On this Scripture the writer observes; "These words clearly convey that Christ is the chosen Redeemer of the whole universe of being. They teach that the reconciliation and restoration to God of the entire creation throughout the eternal ages, was the grand end of our Lord's life, and death, and reign; the end of all the vast, complicated, and seemingly inexplicable movements of earthly providence, and of all the sacred dispensations, economies, and ministries of time." To me this seems to give to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus the utmost grandeur of design, to be the means of reconciling, of heading up, the universe into one harmonious whole, so that God shall be all in all, and continue so for ever; that every trace of evil shall be swept away, and every possibility of its reappearing be barred for ever; this does present something like an adequate motive for Christ's redeeming interposition.

NEMO. We may hopefully abide by the declarations of God's Word, that our blessed Redeemer shall "prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands; that He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall *be satisfied*." The scheme of redemption shall vindicate itself as worthy of the thought and resources of the Infinitely Wise and Holy God. But not certainly in the way your author suggests, by an eventual salvation alike to "the wicked and the righteous, to him that feareth God, and to him that feareth Him not."



The book from which you have quoted is before you, and you cannot but notice that the comment upon the passage is mere assertion, and that there is no attempt to shew from text or context, that this meaning is the mind of the Spirit. The interpretation of this passage, if it deserve such a term, is not countenanced by the natural and grammatical construction of the words, and is opposed to obvious Scripture criticism and exegesis. What are the "all things" here said to be reconciled? Are they not thus defined,—“whether they be things in earth or things in heaven”? Not a word is said of things elsewhere, of things in hell for instance, which would have been essential to your author's idea of a universal restoration. I am but quoting the opinion of our ablest commentators when stating, that Holy Scripture nowhere so speaks as to intimate God shall reconcile to Himself those who do not believe in Him in this present life, or that He does not impute to them their trespasses. You cannot include intelligences out of earth, or out of heaven. Neither can we understand with this writer any restoration or reconciliation of the angels to God, since they are in ineffable and endless communion with the Father of their spirits, but only the restoration of that amity between angels and men which had been interrupted by man's disobedience and estrangement from God. It is man's reconcilment to his offended Maker that is plainly meant, so that both angels and men might in virtue of that peace purchased by the sacrifice of Christ, form one blessed unity under one head. The words—“having made peace through the blood of the cross”—are omitted in the quotation, and why? How can you interpret a passage if you omit a portion of it, and especially, as in this case, omit the key to the whole. The reconciliation here referred to is based on the atonement made on the

cross of Christ, and secures, as you will observe from the context, forgiveness of sins, a "translation into the kingdom of Christ," and a "meetness to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light," to be enjoyed by men solely through faith in the blood of Jesus, and to be secured by them in this life. This cannot be affirmed of the human race generally, nor of persons out of this world after death; but it is a reconciliation possessed by penitent and believing men in the life that now is, who are accounted justified and righteous through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Hence the Apostle urges them to "continue in the faith grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel." How can these obvious truths, lying on the surface of the passage, be explained to include a future state of probation, and teach that all fallen spirits, condemned angels, as well as men, shall hereafter be reconciled and restored in Christ? The reconciliation, let me repeat, is a reconciliation for guilty man on earth, as a preparation and warrant for an harmonious and blessed futurity. Another writer of this school adduces these words in favour of restoration; for God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all"; and thus because St. Paul insists upon the equal chances of both Jew and Gentile in Christ's Redemption, he is made responsible for the conclusion, that none can perish everlastingly! Nothing could be more foreign to the Apostle's meaning, since he is clearly referring to God's calling the Gentiles to be His people by their believing the Gospel, and His design in shewing mercy to them was to provoke the Jews to a holy jealousy, and bring them also to believe on Christ. I may instance another piece of reasoning on this subject; "It is certain," we are told, "that evil cannot be infinite or absolute, or else it



would be equal to God. Then if it has a limit, and had a beginning, it *may* have an end. It *may* be that sin and suffering are but temporary necessities to the finite creature, and he will be for ever rising to a higher and freer condition." Now mark the use of "it may be," "it may have an end," in this quotation, imagination and assertion thus going hand in hand in schemes to set aside the revealed truth of God. We can of course imagine a thousand things, but we must hold to our vital question, "What saith the Scripture?"

ALIQUIS. You know with what an amount of learning it has been argued that there is no final judgment when God's ultimate sentence upon the deeds of men will be pronounced, and that no time can be fixed when his probation is concluded. The theory amounts to this, that the great Day of Judgment, as Christians usually have designated it, is only one of those numerous occasions in the history of the world and of individuals, in which God manifests the misery attendant upon sin, and is not an occasion in which the wicked are sent into eternal punishment, but rather the method for convincing the world of sin, and calling men loudly to repent. A particular period of judicial investigation and adjudication of character, as you stated in the earlier portion of your discourse, is put aside, and thus any sudden outburst of Divine anger against sin is rendered unnecessary, and the sinner is left alone in company with his sins, and stripped of those worldly accessories which make sins pleasant. This theory does powerfully testify to God's displeasure at sin, and to the fact that we can conceive no punishment so awful to the human soul as its abandonment to its own sins. Instead of speaking so much of the great Judgment, and one great Day of the Lord, we should ever remember those constant judgments during life which are intended to lead

men to repentance, that day indeed in which "now even now" we may know Him.

NEMO. I think you have made this theory as comprehensible as its main supporters have ever done, and yet it appears to me to be a hazy one. It is true we are living under a government of rewards and punishments, and we cannot ponder the things around us without finding Divine judgments against sin, and a thousand calls to repentance,—“all the world almost is a map of instances of this kind”;—but if the Scriptures are true, there is something to come additional to all this. If we accept the testimony of Scripture, nothing appears more pointedly clear than the coming of one great final day, in which we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body; from which the “wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” That there will be no sudden outburst of Divine anger, as the abettors of your theory dare to surmise, we may positively aver. God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness; and the procedure and decisions of that day will be worthy of infinite wisdom and infinite righteousness.

“The Judgment Day” is the one and only day, the “eternal judgment” is the one and only condemnation, of which Scripture speaks. Not merely is the evidence for it most direct, (for our Lord from almost the beginning to the end of His teaching refers to it in passages I need not quote to you;) but the same truth is corroborated by what may be called circumstantial proofs, arising from the more casual manner in which it is introduced both by Himself and the Apostles. At the close of the sermon on the mount the Saviour says; “many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? . . . . . then will



I profess unto them I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." Are the Apostles speaking of the importance of holding the truth of Christ? They refer to "The Day" that shall declare it. Do they speak of the shortness of earthly probation? The truth is again presented; "But you, brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief in the night." Are they speaking of Christ's own work? The judgment occurs at once as an illustration; and "as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." They take for granted that this doctrine is a distinctive feature of the Christian system, and presupposes the judgment. Thus the Apostle Paul in the epistle to the Romans, by an abruptness of interrogation flashes this truth, as a universal impression and inevitable conclusion,—“For then how shall God judge the world?” It is adduced, you will notice, as an essential and primary truth. Other points might require adjustment and proof, but this is too plainly an axiom to admit of argumentation and defence. The sacred writer meant by the directness of his inquiry, that nothing was more obvious than the appointment, nothing more general and indispensable, than the reality of the final Judgment.

The leading features of Christ's Revelation, made clear by very definite statements, are that our life on earth is one of trial or probation, that the great Judgment shall fix human destiny, and that this destiny shall be announced once and for ever. Then remember how this doctrine is not only placed in the foreground of the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, but is the basis of a very large portion of the warnings and encouragements, the hopes and fears, which are put forward in Scripture as motives to religiousness of life. Here also it should be remarked

that man's moral sense, his convictions of accountability, and his conscious spiritual relationship to his Creator, foreshadow and anticipate the reality of the great Day of Retribution. Both reason and Scripture testify there is a God, and further that He has a right, and power, and will, to distribute to His subjects, the awards of piety, and the penalties of vice. There is a necessary difference between moral good and evil, a difference not depending upon human judgments, but arising from the immutable nature of things, and the eternal Law of God. Apart from the declarations of Scripture, there are evidences on this subject to which we must attach importance. I might remind you of the general convictions of mankind, for where is the religion, or where is the moral system, which has not, to some extent, recognized a future retribution? This truth was, as you well know, taught by the heathens under the names of Minos, Rhadamanthus, Eacus, and other invisible judges. The furies, the vultures, and fiery lake, which they affirmed to be the tormentors of the wicked in the next world, reveal the apprehensions they had of the desert of sin, and the punishment it courted. You will remember the representations of future life in Homer. There was first the Elysian plain, apparently under the government of Rhadamanthus; next the under world proper, the general receptacle of human spirits, where Minos administers justice among the dead, as a king would on earth. Then you remember the region of Tartarus, as far below that of Aïdes, as Aïdes is below the earth, which appears to have been the dark abode of deposed divinities, or condemned immortals. Does not Virgil tell us of unhappy Theseus transfixed for ever? Does not Socrates in Phædo speak of the wicked being plunged into Tartarus, whence they shall never escape? With whatever imperfections of represen-



tation you cannot but notice, in the writings of the ancients, a recurrence to their belief in a retributive future state of being. On this subject, likewise, I might remind you of the decisions of the human conscience. Does it not forewarn? Does it not assure us of a coming dread tribunal? I will not insist on the construction of all human governments, worthy the name, which are necessarily sustained by the sanctions of rewards and punishments. Nor will I adduce at length the argument from the unequal allotments of the righteous and the wicked in the present world; for I am sure that no reasoning creature can conclude that the present is a final state of things, and the end of a wise and holy government, such as belongs to an infinitely Wise and Holy Governor. Until the day of retribution we have no declaration of the just judgment of God. In Bishop Pearson's fine words; "since the rewards and punishments of this life are no way answerable to so exact a justice as that which is Divine must be, it followeth that there is a judgment yet to come." Perhaps I have said quite sufficient on a mere hypothesis, for the consequences to which it tends are its condemnation, since it contradicts the most definite statements of Christ, discredits the most powerful motives to piety, and does equal violence to Divine Scripture and human reason.

### III.

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ALIQUIS. I have carefully considered the different topics of our previous conversations, on the awful subject of an endless wrath to come. To you, Sir, I must express my thanks for the kind manner in which you have regarded my inquiries. Would you further oblige me by stating on what grounds of equity, God will punish the brief and transient sins of earth with endless torments in another state of being? There is a glaring disproportion between any conduct pursued in time, and the punishment of that conduct being of everlasting duration. I cannot see how eternal retribution can be righteously meted to the issues of a temporary probation. Should there not be some proportion between the crime and the penalty? Yet, if I understand you, your doctrine hangs a dismal eternity upon the little dream-like transactions of life's few and uncertain days.

NEMO. You readily admit I presume that there is a connection between present acts and future conditions of our earthly being. One sin of youth may vitiate a long life, and momentary acts entail interminable consequences. A youthful servant the



other day, by an act of imprudence raised those flames in a small shed, which proved the destruction of Chicago. You further admit that there is a strong conviction in man which connects punishment with wrong doing; but how much punishment does sin deserve? Penalty follows transgression naturally, and if naturally, it must be a righteous penalty; and if moral sins incur endless punishment, who can shew its unrighteousness? The appointment of nature, or, more accurately, God, makes it law, and what He has decreed will not exceed sin's desert, nor can it be shewn to be unjust. It may be right for men to punish sin according only to the apparent harm done to society, but it does not follow that God must be held to the same rule. Society proceeds upon the principle that the extent of time occupied in the commission of a crime should not regulate its punishment. "In very grave cases, indeed, society will not allow the penal shadow to pass from the reputation even after death; so truly is this the case, that there are names which cannot now be pronounced, though they represent long extinct lives, without bringing a frown upon the countenances of all who hear them." We cannot measure qualities by duration. The heinousness of sin must be considered in relation to its own inherent evil, and in its bearing upon the character of God, and the rectitude of His law. But then what can human reason tell us of the malignity of sin as known to God? We can only know this by His own revealed Word, which must be our final court of appeal. Its announcement is; "He will render to every man according to his deeds." A guilty and depraved human being penitently accepts the provisions of redemption, and the blessed effects of his contrition and faith endure in blessedness of life for ever and for ever. This is God's appointment. Another

human being rejects the Gospel, and dies in impenitence and transgression, after long continued remonstrances, and his future is banishment from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power. This is God's appointment. "Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! . . . . . Nay but, O man, who art thou that arguest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?"

The proportion between sin and punishment cannot be one only of time or duration. Common sense and the demands of earthly society condemn it. Admit for a moment this principle of proportion, and how men will differ in their estimate of the heinousness of sin, and consequently of its deserts. And who shall end the controversy, and give us the right measure of punishment? Until we know the whole of the case, we cannot speak of any disproportionate penalty of sin, unless indeed we challenge the judgment of the Most High. The proportion of punishment due to sin is not one of time, but of turpitude. In a Christian land every transgression of man against the Infinite God must be to the infinite Mind what is beyond human calculation. Punishment indeed is the consequence of rejecting the Gospel, it is not strictly speaking penalty in the sense of revenge attached to a crime, but rather a result inseparable from a moral state before God. A parallel eternity of glory is in this life offered, and means are given for its acquisition, but if these means of salvation are despised or neglected, an eternity of condemnation follows. This is the will of our Creator, I repeat, and it is unmistakably declared to us in His revealed word. You will have noticed that in my observations I refer only to men living in a Christian land, and in possession of Christian privileges; for as far as this serious doctrine



refers to infants, idiots, maniacs, and heathens, that I can well leave with our Omniscient and infinitely benignant Sovereign. I am not unaware of the imaginary pictures, rude caricatures, and unkind imputations which the opponents of this doctrine employ; but misrepresentations we will leave to others. Sin must have in the sight of God an inconceivable deformity and aggravation, when we think that in delivering human beings from its consequences His own "Compeer and Fellow" had to become man, and suffer and die. Here we see that the malignity of sin should be considered in connection with the claims and relationships of our Maker, and the solemn obligations it violates. We are indissolubly bound to a lawgiver of infinite perfections, and to a destiny of interminable duration. If we break away from the authority of the Bible, again I ask, where are we? A thousand visions come and go, and leave us in darkness profound. The act of disobedience by our first parents in the Garden of Eden appears trivial, and the time of committing it could not have been of hours, yet this transgression has been followed by inconceivably sad and prolonged consequences. We know not how long the fallen angels were in disobedience and rebellion, but the Bible declares that for their wickedness they are consigned to everlasting perdition, and it is further as plainly stated that those of our race who die in wickedness will share their doom. The outward act of sin is temporary, but the defilement and purposes of the heart cannot be so considered. Evil is what it is in itself, in its dispositions and tendencies. Compared with eternity this span of earthly existence is indeed short, but we must not forget that with ourselves the opportunities of obtaining salvation, and fleeing from the wrath to come, are well-nigh as numerous as the days of our existence. If our period of probation

be unimproved, whether by indulging in foul deeds of open ungodliness, by resisting the strivings of the Spirit, by neglecting the admonitions and instructions of providence, or by refusing to do good and honour God; if death find us in this state, and the Bible be true, an eternity of condemnation, (since sin tends in its own nature to perpetuate its existence and increase its malignity,) is an inevitable consequence.

ALIQUIS. I have noticed you assume, rather than prove, the immortality of the soul. You appear to believe in man's inherent, indefeasible, natural immortality. Do the Scriptures anywhere teach this?

NEMO. It is stated, I see, that, granting the immortality of the soul, there is no escape from the doctrine of eternal punishment. The utmost importance is thus being attached to the question you propose. Shall men live for ever in a state of happiness or misery? This is a tremendous question, this pondering the destiny of myriads of our fellow beings. It is one before which the boldest spirit quails. Is it true, that all we now see, and touch, and weigh, and measure, will ere long cease to be? that these heavens and this earth are mere accidents of man's being, that he does not derive importance from the planet on which he lives, but imparts to it dignity and interest, and that his spirit only is, among the things around us, an abiding reality? This inquiry into the immortality of man, casts into the shade the greatest questions of earth, and commends itself by supreme and pressing claims. But I shall be obliged by your stating exactly the point, or aspect of the question, to which you refer.

ALIQUIS. We are at one on the fact that a blessed futurity of being is secured by a living faith in the Redeemer, and that the regenerate among men will



never see death, but pass to a purer, higher, greater life. On the other hand, the obdurate and incorrigible seek death in the error of their way, and dying in impenitence find death, or destruction of being. Assuming that the soul is naturally mortal, and having no communion with the Redeemer, it ceases to be. So that the inquiry is simply this, is there proof of the soul's natural and inherent life after the wreck and waste of the body? My idea is that Christianity treats man, not as immortal, but rather as a candidate for immortality. The idea of an immortality inherent in man, is a pure figment of heathen philosophy, invented to relieve the awful gloom that always surrounds the grave, where life and immortality are not brought to light by the Gospel.

NEMO. I could not suppose that man is necessarily and independently immortal, and that God cannot terminate the soul's life. I could not dream that the creature is absolutely and unconditionally as enduring as the Creator, for this evidently would be a contradiction in terms. My creed is, that every human being possesses a percipient, rational, and voluntary spirit, additional to his body, that this immaterial soul or mind, was made and designed to be immortal, and that as far as we know there is nothing in the nature of the soul, or in the circumstances through which it may pass—such as bodily disease, or change, or death,—that tends naturally to its extinction, but that much evidence on natural grounds may be adduced to shew that mind, or personality, never ceases to be. On the annihilation theory, which denies the Day of Judgment, man is believed to be extinguished at death; but others who hold this theory believe also in the Day of Judgment, and assume that the soul does live on for ages after the body has perished. There then is a capacity for an after life. I believe it is true

that they who adopt the theory, "*Life in Christ only*," concede that man possesses a soul. They mean I suppose by the soul, an immaterial or spiritual entity or principle in him that thinks, reasons, remembers, and aspires; which discovers moral and spiritual affinities, and is in its essence and powers radically distinct from his physical frame. You and I mean this; by a soul, we understand an immaterial and spiritual intelligence. Is this their account of it? If so, this soul possesses no physical, no dissoluble parts. It cannot be decomposed, since it is not composed. The body is naturally mortal, its constituents are in constant change and waste, and after awhile the vital force which sustains its functions is lost. The soul's essence is wholly different from this; its life being independent of physical changes and material sustenance, there is nothing in its constitution, that we can see, to arrest its onward consciousness. It may be by Divine power, annihilated or expunged, and this is the doctrine of the destructionist. Now I must affirm that the literal death of the soul, the termination or ceasing to be, of the thinking substance, which the Creator made with a capacity for immortality, cannot be proved by reason to have ever occurred, nor is it declared in Scripture. If you allow that man has an immaterial soul, its immortality seems to follow; but if you deny him the possession of an immaterial principle or mind, a strong indication or presumption of existence after death would still be found, on the ground of the law of continuance of being.

ALIQUIS. How can God create an immortal existence? The utmost we can understand on this matter is an intention to make man immortal, otherwise you constitute the creature independent of his Creator.



NEMO. There you are assuming that I believe in the natural, indefeasible, inextinguishable immortality of man. But have I not just stated this is not my belief. Nor am I aware of any writer on the doctrine of future punishment that does so believe. Although invested with an immortal nature, man is still dependent upon God,—his very immortality being preserved by Him. Man's nature is specific, immortality being as much a property and determination of his nature as conscience, or volition, or accountability. But a created being, neither in this life nor in the life to come, will or can be, independent of its Maker. The question we have to consider is not what God can do, but what He has revealed as His will and purpose, which we may learn from His Inspired Word. You tell me that the soul of a wicked and impenitent man is incorporeal and spiritual in its essence; now, it is for you to shew how in its simple unity it can cease to be. How from natural laws, or from any kind of knowledge, do you teach us to conclude that the soul of the unrighteous man must die as the body dies? Holy Scripture says it will be punished for ever, as the result of a life of rebellion against God. Admitting that the punishment is often called "death," and "destruction," in Scripture, we have learnt in our previous conversations that both these terms are applied to men while living. Spiritual death or destruction is something additional to natural death; as religious life is something supplemental to natural life, and as eternal life is something additional to mere immortality of existence.

ALIQUIS. But I must remind you that "immortal soul," and "immortal spirit," are phrases never found in Holy Writ. The word "spirit" (pneuma) frequently occurs in the Hebrew and Greek Scrip-

tures, which word denotes the seat of our ethical and religious nature, and since I do not find the expression "immortal spirit," I infer, in the case of the impenitent and unregenerate, their soul at death ceases to be. You may remember that Bishop Law denied that there is any language in Scripture which stands for a purely immaterial principle, or for a principle which can subsist in a separation from the flesh.\*

NEMO. We must take care not to be too much influenced by what even some good and learned men have said, but not proved. Their judgments at times are unaccountable. Solomon gave good counsel in these words; "Take no heed unto all words that are spoken." The word "soul" in Scripture is often confounded with simple life, yet our Saviour tells us there is "a soul which man cannot kill." The contra-distinctions in Scripture are very frequent and suggestive. We read of the "fruit of the body, for the sin of the soul"; we read "the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak"; we read, "that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." The denial of a spiritual entity in man, and of his immortality, is not new in the discussions on the eternity of future punishment. Whiston doubts the possibility of immortality in any creature good or bad; Dodwell affirms that all men are non-immortal; other and greater names might be mentioned. If man be not immortal, if immortality be not a designed constituent and determination of his being, how can its loss or abandonment be a punishment, or how, except in this life, can he receive the due rewards of his many wicked deeds? Immortality on your theory is an adventitious prize which may be won by self-denial and devotedness to God; but the sinner can be wild and rampant in evil, and then without an

\* "Nature and End of Death under the Christian Covenant," by Bp. E. Law.



arrest, by his own suicide, elude justice and cease to be! By the denial of a personal life after death to the wicked, the perfections of Deity are impugned. His veracity, benevolence, wisdom, and power, are all challenged. You say the phrase "immortal soul" is not found in Scripture. Be it so, yet the truth is found there, though not in these identical words, for it tells us "this mortal must put on immortality." Do you meet with the word "Trinity" in the Bible? Do you discover there the word "Providence"? It is affirmed that the words "mortality" and "immortality" do not once occur in the Old Testament. But did not the states or events they signify occur during the years of the old economy? Was there no death all this while, and no everlasting life for the holy dead, for angels, for the Blessed God? Notwithstanding the use which has been made of this quibble, I trust it will have little influence on your mind. The Word of Truth does not take to itself the honour of discovering that there is a God. Prior instruction, intuition, and the things which are seen, are assumed to be its abundant proof. In like manner Holy Scripture does not argue out and make visible the future state of all men, but rather reveals the nature of a future existence, and warns against its perversion, and urges preparation for its beatification.

"There is life in Christ only, and immortality is peculiar to the regenerate," you tell me. But can you read the Gospels, can you read the appeals and warnings of the Saviour, without concluding that He believed in the after life of the wicked? Pray remember what I have before noticed, that He appeared among a people who believed in immortality, and in future punishments, a people who took their ideas from the Old Testament Scriptures; and did not His teaching tend to con-

firm their previous impressions? I repeat, have you not an irrepressible sense of the future existence of the persons Christ addressed? I do not aver that the Faithful Witness taught the soul's necessary and independent immortality, but did He not teach man's "inmost personality of self-consciousness and self-agency," and the certainty of man's coming immortality? Your theory makes Christ's words meaningless, and His Incarnation and sufferings wasteful displays of compassion. We can only understand the necessity and grandeur of redemption as we estimate the peril, the greatness, and interminable life of the creature it sought to redeem and save. If man be necessarily a weed of time, and destined by his very nature to perish at death, why talk of the glory of the cross of Christ? If man be naturally mortal, how could St. Paul speak of that nature which Christ assumed, even human nature, as being a little lower than the angels? Why the agonizing desire to save men, and watch for their souls as they that must give an account, if man only be a being who may sin and luxuriate in crime until death, and then be expunged for ever? Then further, does your creed teach you that as soon as I repent and believe on Christ, I make myself immortal? Is it your doctrine that I create my own immortality, by a personal trust in the Redeemer? Or do you teach that Christ actually creates a new substance in man when he is accepted of Him, even an immortal soul? You tell me it was not created immortal, and that natural immortality is an error; then is it the same soul, or a new soul, that is endowed with immortality? Tell me how immortal life is generated in a mortal soul. If man die at death because of his non-relationship to Christ, and because he is not of the regenerate ones, then he will not appear at the judgment seat of Christ to give an



account of the deeds done in the body; and many other truths besides this are thus forgotten and denied. Ah! Sir, where shall we wander when we leave the testimony of God's Inspired and Precious Word? Abandon that Book, which you must regard as a mystery of Fact, or a mystery of Fiction, (the Fiction being by far the greater mystery of the two,) and where are we, and whither shall we drift? A thousand voices will then unite to proclaim our condition one of sorrow and despair.

A little more you will allow me to say on the assumption that Revelation promises existence after death to the regenerate only, and not to all men; since I cannot but believe that a universal immortality runs through the Bible, and that men are immortal whether they know it or not, whether they desire it or otherwise. The sense of immortality may indeed be lost, be clouded by darkness, or crushed by ungodliness, the fact, however, whether for weal or woe, remains, and gross scepticism is no refuge from a coming judgment. I will not here adduce natural arguments for the soul's immortality, which, for thoughtful minds, possess a weighty importance. Both nature and reason agree with the doctrine of the soul's natural immortality, not an independent and uncontingent immortality, but with the idea that the soul of man is constituted immortal, and that God wills its ceaseless continuance. You properly however appeal to Scripture, and cheerfully would I stake the issue on God's Word, since on this serious question the chief basis of evidence is Scripture, and not reason or philosophy. As I have stated, throughout Scripture the after life of the human soul, whether in the case of the righteous or unrighteous, is everywhere assumed and enforced. The Bible does not say to me, create an immortality for yourself by obedience to God, and a penitent acceptance of Christ's merits. We read

in Scripture that while man was formed like other animals out of the dust of the ground to be a living creature on earth, a marked distinction between him and the inferior animals is indicated by his being formed in the image, and after the likeness of God. Man is far above the lower animals, not only by his possession of the faculties of thought, conscience, and conscious freedom, but by his being fashioned in the similitude of his Maker, which must imply, I judge, his possession of a never dying soul. Immortality is a distinct feature of the Divine nature, and if man has been created in the Divine likeness, he must have been created immortal. The existence of a soul additional to his body, and amazingly superior to it, as well as superior to the nature and faculties of the lower animals, is plainly taught by the inspired writers. The great gulf which lies between the powers of instinct and those of reason, would lead us to expect for reason a very different end. What comparison is there between the machine-like perfection and unalterable limitation of instinct, and the nobility and limitless progress of man's reason? There are some zoological affinities, and some feeble mental resemblances, between man and the apes, but truly the difference between any of the lower animals, even the most sagacious, and the human being, is as the difference between nothing and infinity. Since man has not lost by his fall the power of reason, nor his sense of volition, nor his capacity for the love and enjoyment of his Creator, why suppose that he lost his investiture of immortality, that obvious feature of God's image in which he is said to have been created? From the statements of the Divine Record we cannot but learn that the immortality of the soul is an objective fact, independent alike of man's mental conceptions, and of his moral condition. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that



goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

In the following Scriptures the doctrine of the immortality of human beings, equally in relation to the righteous and the wicked, is as explicit and emphatic as any combination of words could make it. "And Jesus said unto them; marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." A similar Scripture to this occurs in the book of Daniel, which declares that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Do not these well-known passages teach a universal immortality, a resurrection of the righteous, and of the unrighteous? "Our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus bears directly on the point in hand. It is impossible to turn aside its force, by calling the chief parts of the parable drapery, meant only to grace its substance, . . . . Lazarus dies, and is 'carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.' Did our Lord so speak, while knowing that such an event never did occur? The rich man 'lifted up his eyes in hell.' Would the Lord Jesus have said this in spite of the fact, that no man ever enters hell till after the resurrection? If not, does He mean that the resurrection was already past? No; men are still on the earth; even the brothers of the rich man are not good; he would fain have them warned. No ingenuity can cover the fact, that this Scripture sanctions the belief, that, immediately after death, men are alive,—the holy in rest, the wicked in torment."

In a blessed and lofty sense "Christ is our Life." We adore Him as the "Prince of Life." We are

infinitely more indebted to Him than we can tell, and this in other words I have been careful to affirm. It may be true that if our Redeemer had not become the surety of our race, the human soul might have lost its deathless vitality. I say this is a possibility, but it is a speculative point. We have, I must still remind you, to inquire not into what might have been, but what is. We cannot learn from the teaching of Scripture that the immortality of man is the result of Christ's mediatorship, unless it be in the sense in which men's present natural existence is His bestowment. Man's immortality arises from his nature, from the will of his Creator, and union with Christ ennobles and glorifies that immortality. Because man exists his immortality follows, the mind is its own witness that it is something more than matter, and since I have proof of the possession of an immaterial principle in my nature, that is a stride towards the possibility of my immortality. Man is capable of entertaining the truths which relate to a life beyond the grave, and this is true of the most unholy and impenitent among men, and therefore it may reasonably be concluded that he is designed for such a life. You cannot awake in sheep or oxen the conception of future ages, but the idea of eternity is connatural with the human mind. But why should this be so, if the wicked, body and soul, are to perish at death? In the days of His flesh the Blessed Redeemer exclaimed to His despisers; "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." These despisers of Christ had life, for they were living beings, with intellect and heart and freedom. So that Christ's gift of life is something supplemental to natural life, and to immortal life. These neglecters of Christ had life, but would not come to Him for its enrichment and blessedness, *not* for its prolongation. Christ communicates to the



human soul the life of truth, of purity, of spirituality. He is the life of our pardon and justification; He is our life of sanctification and holiness; the life of all Christian graces and strength. And His spiritual blessings on earth are the exclusive preparation and pledge of our everlasting blessedness. It is in this sense "Christ is our Life."

ALIQUIS. In my examinations of this subject I have sought a satisfactory answer to a question like this; if future punishment be not remedial and terminable, what can be its purposes in the universe? On referring to the Greek terms of the passage from which you discoursed, I found the word "kolasis" requiring the translation "everlasting chastisement, (or, correction,)" rather than "everlasting punishment." And further, I have always supposed that the end of punishment is the improvement of the criminal. "The infliction of sin, even in this world, is often wonderfully restorative and strengthening." Why should it not be universally so in the future state?

NEMO. This word "kolasis" found in the passage before us, does frequently mean restraint or correction, but it is oftener used by Greek writers in a severer sense. It is a word which describes punishment in relation to the feelings of the criminal, more than in relation to law. The New Testament word for corrective discipline, or fatherly chastisement, is however different, as you may see by examining Hebrews xii. 6, and Rev. iii. 19, the word you find there never being used for the final punishment of the wicked. In the orations of Demosthenes, and of Lysias, and also in Lucian's "Dialogues of the Dead," the term "kolasis" is employed in the sense of inflictions apart from any reformatory design. The words in the New Testament used to denote punishment, everywhere

imply the endurance of penalty for the vindication of violated law and justice. Your theory of the design of punishment is a popular one, and I readily admit that the recovery of the criminal is important, but, as you well know, it is not even the secondary design of punishment, and is often disregarded altogether. You say "everlasting correction"; yes, that terrible word "everlasting" must be retained. But what do you mean by "everlasting chastisement," by "everlasting correction"? Correctly speaking, the necessity of punishment arises from the claims of justice, and is not intended for the cure of the criminals, but rather for the upholding of the law and government of God, and for the warning of others. God does not punish, if I may so simplify my meaning, in His private capacity, but rather in His public relationship to His intelligent creation. He must uphold the strength of His government, and promulgate proofs of His abhorrence of disobedience, to the countless tribes with which He has peopled immensity. How frequently we learn that the punishment which comes from God in this life has not been designed for the reformation of the criminal, but for retribution and warning. Such was the Deluge, and such the awful destruction of Jerusalem. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

Partial and biassed views of the turpitude of sin, not restorative and terminable no end can be suggest the objection, that if future punishment be answered by its infliction. This objection assumes that future punishments are the manifestations of the vindictiveness of God, or the payment of some debt exacted by Him. There could not be a more



faulty view of the case. "Sin is a disturbing force, of whose energy we have no sufficient measure, and to whose effects we can set no bounds." Is it too much looked upon as a fact abstractedly, as bearing only upon its perpetrators, or is judged of by the time which its commission occupies. On this subject "what we know is as nothing to what we know not." It is forgotten that every act of Divine government is public, and of universal interest. "And the man that will do presumptuously, even that man shall die; and thou shalt put away the evil. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously." Punishment cannot be divorced from law and justice, nor can you separate it from the purpose of example, and thus the mere treatment of the individual without reference to government, and the good of others, would be the breaking up and forgetfulness both of Divine and human relationships.

ALIIQUIS. Then you concede the frightful reality of eternal evil? As I before alleged, from your teaching it appears there will be endless, unpausing, and real suffering in God's universe. This is a horrid conclusion to abide by, and one which appears to me contradictory of the revealed character of God. An eternity of aimless suffering,—where in nature to this is there any analogy? In Dr. Young's words; "this at least is surely unquestionable, that were a single immortal spirit to be eternally miserable, no truly good being in the universe could ever be happy. It would be an intolerable torture to all."

NEMO. Here we are again in a path we have often trodden. On this awful and painful subject I must ask you, shall any "Teach God knowledge"? Rash statements are easily hazarded, and appeals to our sensibilities are plausible. Punishment meted out by charity is absurd, and if sensibilities were

to rule in all judicial proceedings, every species of suffering would become impossible. "Our sympathy can never be supposed to constitute an action right or wrong.\*" The question I must hold you to is this, not what is supposable by us in our earthly life, but what is true of the future state of the incorrigible as it comes plainly before us in God's Inspired Word. We may rest assured that what the Infinitely Wise and Holy One does, will meet with the approval of intelligence, and the composure of the strongest emotion.

It is easy to discourse on God's benevolence and compassion, and easy to reason against eternal punishment guided by human affections and considerations; but God's whole character must consult the good of His universal empire, which truly cannot be done by abating the penalties threatened to vice, nor by emboldening wickedness, in affording it hope of exemption from its deserts, either by annihilation, by terminableness of being, or by ultimate restoration to the Divine favour through the ordeal, however severe and prolonged, of a future chastisement. Hell and heaven are characters, as well as places. If remorse can be endured at all, why not for ever? Continued punishment implies continued sin, for if you admit volition to belong to the lost, the hardening effect of sin will continue, as in the world of woe, evil will reign unchecked by any redemptive appliance. The very sin that makes hell may still be loved, and the leprosy of hatred to God and holiness continue. The history of sin in this world is affirmed in these words, "Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse," and how can it be assumed that in the life to come, where there will be no restraining influences of providence and grace, it can be otherwise? For thousands of years fallen angels and fallen men have been in

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\* Dr. Abercrombie.



the restorationist's "furnace of probation," and yet not one instance has occurred of reformation. If one has occurred, where is the account of it? Is there a solitary example to be adduced in favour of this paraded theory? Consider the perfections of God which sin insults and defies, consider the obligations of rational and reflective men to obey and love God, consider the meanness and selfishness of disobedience, and consider further the everlasting felicity and glory promised to such as love and serve God; and then say who can gauge the dimensions of sin, or the measure of its deserts? Surely the Divine mind is only equal to an estimate of its malignity and of its punishment. If treason against our good and righteous Sovereign be practised, and the offer of everlasting glory rejected, what remains for such offenders but the abiding displeasure of the Almighty as long as His Being continues? Instead therefore of this solemn doctrine being inconsistent with the character and perfections of God, it honours the Divine Nature, vindicates His insulted Majesty, glorifies His injured Justice, and exalts the authority of His law, by the most impressive and awful sanctions; while it cannot fail to raise our estimate of the "Great Salvation" provided by the Redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

ALIQUIS. I have heard it argued that since virtue is its own reward, and vice its own torment, the offender against God is sufficiently punished on earth without hell being super-added. Would not a notion of this kind, if it could be confirmed, relieve this appalling doctrine of endless suffering?

NEMO. For some time I have thought that the questions you propose do not embody the convictions of your own mind, but that you are rather the mouth-piece of others. I am sure you attach little weight to your last inquiry. Of course there is some truth in this notion, but as it bears upon

the fact of future punishment, it is of no force. I may ask, why does human society imprison the thief, if vice be its sufficient punishment? Is society a greater power to be offended than God? And yet offences against society are not expiated by temporary personal annoyance. I may further ask, if virtue be its own sufficient reward, why think of heaven, and seek its fruitions? If your doctrine possessed in this connection any strength, it might be employed against the reality of future blessedness, as well as against that of future reprobation and woe. The persons doomed to "go away into everlasting punishment," are expressly condemned for having neglected their fellow-creatures, that is, for the vices of indolence and selfishness. They are not condemned because they had an heretical creed, but on account of their misanthropy. This gives us further insight into the nature of sin. Here we see it was not in any sense its own punishment, and to what would in these days be called trifling offences, a terrible penalty was annexed. There is only a modicum of truth to be assigned to the notion that vice is its own punishment, and virtue its own reward.

And here permit, on this solemn theme of man's destiny, a general observation. Our duty is not to speculate and create a Revelation, but honestly to interpret the one entrusted to us. The God of that Revelation will fully sustain and justify all the consequences of our implicit credence and faithful obedience. The utmost efforts are now made to render the doctrine of sin's deserts agreeable to man's reason. I still repeat, that, notwithstanding the plain declarations of Scripture, expedients and conclusions are urged more in harmony, it is surmised, with God's character than consigning men to an endlessness of woe. You will have been struck with the contrast between the imperious and rash assertions



of many writers on your side of this controversy, and the grave and reverent words of St. Paul. In Hooker's words, this awful doctrine "gave the Apostle occasion to enter into many mysteries, and to handle with a bleeding heart things which his own very pen even trembleth sometimes to set down." Not one word of bitterness would I utter, but must confess to a feeling of surprise at the irreverent, pompous, and sarcastic manner in which I have found, what is deemed by many wise and holy men, the Scriptural doctrine opposed, not discussed; caricatured, not gravely and comprehensively investigated. The infinite love of God to man, I as fully admit as any, but it must harmonize with infinite justice and holiness. As carefully as I possibly could I have examined the different theories which seek to modify, or remove the eternity of future punishment, but honestly must I avow to you, that no relief has been afforded me, and that God's Word is my only resting place. Remove this doctrine from the Christian's creed, and you introduce confusion into all the designs and provisions of Salvation. The terrible reality of hell, and the greatness of man's spiritual nature, appear to me to stand or fall together. If the soul be inexorable, if the whole world is as nothing compared with its worth, then whosoever abuses his own soul, and neglects its preparation for eternity, necessarily secures, as it seems to me, an entail of irremedial consequences.

ALIQUIS. I have found that in our introductory conversation, I admitted too much to make my objections as cogent as I could have desired. I can now see, that if the Inspiration of the Bible be admitted, the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment must follow. I must acknowledge that no fair criticism, that no honest handling of the Bible, can divest it of this appalling doctrine. Your strength in this argument has been in binding me

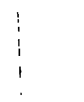
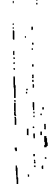
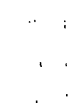
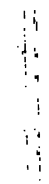
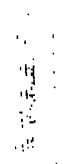
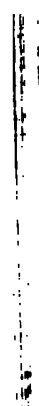
to the teaching of Scripture. This I have felt from the beginning, and now confess the issue must be this,—either abandon the Inspiration of God's Word, or abide by the ancient and well-nigh world-wide Christian doctrine of the eternity of the future punishment of the impenitent wicked. Plainly enough I can see, that if the Divinity of God's Word be trifled with, a thousand human conceits may be paraded, and plausibly taught. I see that if I admit the fact of revealed truth, it must be Divine truth and therefore I cannot rest too confidently on its immutability, definiteness, and authority.

NEMO. You have expressed my own convictions. What the future may bring to us no mortal can tell, but we have to deal with present truth, and frequently have I thought that there was great mercy, as well as wisdom, in the assurance of the inspired writers, that their communications are exclusive and final. They give no intimation that other disclosures will ever supersede their own, or that the revolutions and demands of time will exhaust them. Destroy the evidence which sustains the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, and then their doctrines fall with it; but that *has not yet been done*. It will be time for the witling and the banterer to scorn Christianity, when they have annulled the majesty of facts that throng around it, when they have shewn that it is contradicted by the experience of the human heart, that it meets no hitherto unrelieved moral difficulty, that it anticipates no profound necessities of man's spiritual nature, and that the testimony of history proves it to be a fabrication, rather than a real, unearthly, and conquering power.

Are there not strong practical reasons why this revealed doctrine should be included in the subjects of the Christian ministry? In its denial, or in the adoption of a theory of restoration, sin sleeps upon a soft



pillow. What has the transgressor to fear from annihilation? What is there serious in the rejection of Christ, if death ends and expunges man's existence? Where are "the terrors of the Lord," which the Apostle employed to persuade men, if "probation is a name, and no more, and men are to be tried in another state of existence?" A heathen can ask, "If the day of man's death annihilate him, what can be more desirable than, in the midst of the ills of life, to lie down and shut his eyes in everlasting sleep?" It will be wretchedly awful for some professedly Christian teachers to meet the members of their congregations at the Bar of God. How many in these days are proving false to their Ordination Vows. It is a very fashion to cavil at old truths, while error and speculation receive the homage due only to established verities. You have intimated how rarely this doctrine is enforced. No trifler, it is true, can preach it, no indolent and jocose minister of religion will have much to say on this subject. Such a one is a stranger to the Psalmist's experience; "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law." We cannot in our teaching, as Holy Scripture shews, dispense with warnings, any more than with promises. That inborn and strong dread of a coming judgment should be appealed to, and in these times of spiritual indifference, the ministers of Christ are loudly summoned to a serious proclamation of "the whole council of God." The severity of this doctrine is assuaged when you remember, that everlasting woe is not inevitable; for "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." That is the gracious appointment under which we live, "and this is His commandment that we should believe on the Name of His Son Jesus Christ." We may escape to mansions of eternal felicity.





Can we be sure the Bible is True?

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YOUTH AND YEARS  
AT  
OXFORD,

IN  
*Conversation on Questions of the Day.*

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PART 2.

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BY  
MANTHANO.

OXFORD: G. SHRIMPTON, 9, TURL STREET.  
LONDON: WHITTAKER & CO.

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## I.

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ALIQUIS. In resuming the conversations you so kindly promised me, I must inform you that I have had to encounter not a little banter and animadversion on the concessions I made to you, with respect to the Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture. I have been told that I assumed what ought to have been proved, in accepting the proposition that the Bible is a final and sufficient appeal on such a subject as the "Eternity of Future Punishment." The late Baden Powell asserted, that no argument on earth should induce him to believe a miracle, and somewhat analogous to this is the disbelief of many of the momentous doctrine we lately considered, for rather than credit it, they are prepared to repudiate the Divinity and claims of God's Word.

NEMO. Of this I am aware. Rather than accept the doctrine of the abject and hopeless future of any of our fellow-beings, some are quite ready to surrender the Divine pretensions and preciousness of the Christian Revelation. But there is no weight nor argument in all this. Disbelieving the fact of future punishment, and rejecting Inspiration because it is thought to be taught in it, proves nothing. These are only excesses of scepticism, and evidences of the domination of human

reason. On the other hand multitudes of thoughtful minds would as stoutly maintain that no argumentation on earth could induce them to ignore the truth of the Gospel, nor discredit its plainly revealed disclosures of a region of endless future woe. But this persistency and energy of assertion does not on either side amount to much.

ALIQUIS. This I have learnt some time ago. My particular inquiry is this;—Is it possible to arrive at a satisfactory and unhesitating conviction of the truth of the Christian Religion? We are living in an age of severe and trenchant criticism on all subjects of human opinion, and on none more than on human judgments touching the hitherto generally acknowledged faith of Christians; and while I hope my faith in the Gospel of Christ is sound, I must confess to uneasiness of mind, and a desire to know something in Christian evidences more definite and assuring. Society is debating whether it shall remain Christian or not. Here in the University, examinations on Biblical subjects are discouraged, and a feeble minority of the men are being trained for the Christian ministry. Religious indifferentism, to use no stronger word, rests upon Oxford as a dark and threatening cloud. Then, you know, in that part of the country from which I come, I have had an opportunity of hearing the ridicule with which the claims of Christianity are assailed. Christianity is looked upon by shrewd and reading mechanics as one of the numerous systems by which the world is checked in its intellectual, social, and political progress. They look upon it as an engine for cramping the minds of men, and fastening on them the chains of a spiritual despotism more terrible than any mere physical thralldom. I have heard them with sarcastic severity inveigh against tyranny and priestcraft muffled up in the cloak of piety. They point to factions in the Church, wrangling with each other on subtle distinctions, and whilst advocating liberty of opinion for themselves, practically denying it to others;



contending for creeds, and formulas, and ceremonies, rather than emulating one another in justice, and mercy, and love. The whole ontology of our religion, the problem of the existence of the First Cause, and the material basis of all life, are debated in our schools, nor are the people beyond the University spared.

NEMO. Admitting, as I must, the substantial accuracy of your representation, yet I hope you will not think too much of the scepticism of the day on religious subjects. True it is that the most solemn fundamental questions, which all religion in some form presupposes, are now challenged, still you must remember that from the beginning, from the days of Cain and Abel, scepticism has been at war with faith, and severe indeed at times have been their conflicts. Abel chose to walk by faith, and believed in a Revelation; Cain, on the other hand, walked by sight, and rejected mystery and commandment in religion. Here is the gist of the controversy that has raged from their day, and which now appears in fiercer antagonism. Long ago the fires of faith would have been extinguished, had it not been, as the inimitable allegorist tells us, for that personage, "on the other side of the wall with a vessel of oil in his hand, of the which he did continually cast (but secretly) into the fire.\*" Christianity has been sustained in the world by a Divine Power. Bishop Butler in his day wrote; "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principle subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." Upwards of sixty years afterwards, Robert Hall, in his sermon on "Modern

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\* Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress."

Infidelity," recorded his impression of the times in which he lived. "To obliterate the sense of Deity, of moral sanctions, and a future world, and by these means to prepare the way for the total subversion of every institution, both social and religious, which men have been hitherto accustomed to revere, is evidently the principal object of modern sceptics; the first sophists who have avowed an attempt to govern the world, without inculcating the persuasion of a superior power." These periods were indeed days of great gloom and depression, but they were over-ruled by God for the development of the vitality both of the outward and internal evidences of the Gospel. In earlier ecclesiastical history you will find that the enemies of our Faith have at some periods appeared to prevail, and the glory of the Church has suffered a temporary eclipse, but it was still in existence, and like the sun obscured by a passing cloud, emerged again into power and splendour. The struggle is not yet over, although ages of victory, and universal monuments of beneficent conquest, vindicate the Gospel's claims, and pledge its final triumphs.

In answer to your Important inquiry I can assure you that solid and irrefragable reasons can be adduced for the Divine authority of the Christian religion, and that assent to its truth may be intelligent, profound, and supreme. "If we would see what the force of simple assent can be, viewed apart from its reflex conformation, we have but to look at the generous and uncalculating energy of faith, as exemplified in the primitive martyrs, in the youths who defied the pagan tyrant, or the maidens who were silent under his tortures. It is assent, pure and simple, which is the motive cause of great achievements; it is confidence, growing out of instincts rather than arguments, stayed upon a vivid apprehension, and animated by a transcendent logic, more concentrated in will and in deed for the very reason that it has not been subjected to any intellectual development.\*"

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\* Newman's "Grammar of Assent," p. 209.



ALIQUIS. Such an assent as this would be conservative, and of priceless value. But where is such faith now to be found?

NEMO. It is not, be assured, extinct upon the earth, nor is it an impossible attainment. Many are now at the posts of Christian duty in this and other lands, who have exhibited great strength of faith, and if the severest persecution were to arise they would be found equal to the occasion. The Divine vitality of the Gospel is still realized, and multitudes of devout servants of the Church are "kept in peace by Jesu's Name, and supported by His smile." Although you have put your case strongly, I do not think that the present tone and feeling of society is anti-Christian, yet it does ask to be re-assured, and your inquiry appears to me to indicate the Church's duty in this age. But what would you accept as a moveless bulwark of faith in the Gospel of Christ?

ALIQUIS. That, I think, is a difficult question to answer. I shall want time to consider a reply to such an inquiry.

NEMO. Quite as difficult as you suppose is the answer to such a question, since human minds and demands vary so much. All the days of our probationary existence on earth will be more or less days of temptation and trial, and when least expected doubts and queries will be suggested. Notwithstanding, I hold the possibility of securing an abiding satisfaction in the credentials of our Holy Faith. Some men continue in disbelief because they will not read on Christian evidences, or they are unreasonable in their demands, asking a kind of evidence which can neither be given nor received. Some identify inquiry with objection, looking rather for difficulties against the Gospel, than for rational confirmations of its truth. Then how frequently is it seen that direct historic evidences of Revelation are ignored, in attempts to reply to the

alleged contradictions of modern and unsettled science ! In the investigations of Christian evidences our aim should not be to follow an indefinite speculation, but to ascertain what is positive, appreciable, and changeless. A distinct and unequivocal position may be reached, then the inquirer may say, "here is evidence which I must receive, not from mere inclination, but because proof commands it." He may also add, "whatever may be affirmed or conjectured on other points of Christian evidence, this is real, and by it I must stand." "He who doubts," says Pascal, "but seeks not to have his doubts removed, is at once the most criminal and the most unhappy of mortals. If together with this he is tranquil and self-satisfied, or makes his state a topic of mirth or self-gratulation, I have no words to describe so insane a creature." Nothing is easier than to raise objections, but no worthy end comes of such a procedure. Some subjects will all life long be far beyond our senses, and elude our comprehension and grasp. Unless all history be discredited, and the belief of the civilized world be proved to be a delusion, ground may be found for a cordial and undisturbed assent to the claims of Christianity. We are told that the prevalence of fact over theory is the glory of science. By such a rule as this Christian advocates are willing to abide. Appearances and speculations may set themselves in plausible array against the truth of Revelation, but it can shew that its origin and disclosures claim the alliance and support of fact.

ALIQUIS. It does appear surprising to me that the evidences of the Christian religion are not within easier reach. How is it that a book designed for all grades of society, and for every order of mind, asks for so much research and labour for its vindication ? Should it not be so distinct in its claims and instructions, as to render a tedious examination unnecessary ? If you throw a stone from the ground it will assuredly descend again, and no one can be found to dispute the reality of



the fact. You behold the sun rising, and witness its dispersion of darkness, and no one cavils at the statement, that the sun is the source of light to our earth. Why is not the attestation of the divinity of the Bible as obvious and satisfying ?

NEMO. Several reasons may be urged in reply to this old and common inquiry. We might ask, who are to be the judges in this matter ? The Almighty was under no obligation to reveal Himself, and therefore when He condescended to do so, had a right to communicate His Revelation in the way most in accordance with His own wisdom and design. The Christian system must be allowed the privilege of explaining its own nature, and limiting its extent of evidence. It is not a covenant between two equal parties, nor even between a Creator and His creatures simply, but between an infinitely holy and just God, and fallen degenerate men. Had the Almighty reduced Christianity to a manifest and uniform certainty, it would have been inconsistent with the very designs and doctrines of Revelation. It is not, surely, for condemned man to choose the method of his deliverance, sufficient for him is the announcement that a way to it has been opened, to excite gratitude and induce examination. If we consult nature and common life, we shall find circumstances similar to those complained of in Christianity. In the hourly occurrences of earth, we cannot foretel the certain consequence of the most vigorous exertions, nor ensure the success of the best endeavours. To have excluded difficulties and toil from the search into the evidences of the Christian religion, would have been to have formed the world on one plan, and religion upon another. Do we find in nature and in common life that our mercies come to us without labour and anxiety ? Is everything prepared to our hands, and have we only to open them and grasp the desired good ? The mode in which the Bible is given to us agrees not only with the constitution of nature, and the ordinations of common

existence, but also with the mental and spiritual dispensation under which we live. We are summoned to walk by faith, rather than by sight. Our natural pride, our assumed self-sufficiency, our imaginary discernment and vaunted virtues, are rebuked by the demands upon our humility, obedience, self-forgetfulness, and confessions of sinfulness and ignorance. Humility in God's estimation is the adornment of the human soul. "He will beautify the meek with salvation." How can unholy and imperious reason force its way to the secrets of spiritual truth, and the favour of God? Notwithstanding the difficulties and uncertainties which present themselves to our imperfect reason, with respect to the evidences of the Holy Scriptures, I must strongly aver that for all practical purposes their truth may be ascertained, and they are amply sufficient of themselves to make man "wise unto salvation." Go to the modest, upright villager, he has not, and needs not, books of reference, and treatises of learning, yet he is in possession of an inspiring and soul-satisfying conviction of the divinity of the Bible that nothing can destroy nor disturb.

ALIQUIS. I am disposed to regard this villager with consideration, and envy the serenity and elevation of his soul. How may he have attained his certitude of faith and composure of spirit?

NEMO. I rejoice to hear you say this. You are not in haste, as is too commonly the case, to characterize the villager's enjoyment of Christian truth,—ignorance, fanaticism, delusion, and so forth. This man has found the easier and safer mode of ascertaining the divinity of the Christian faith. The firmest and most luminous source of evidence is the consciousness of the grace and power of the Gospel. Our Saviour Jesus, who must be accepted as an authority on this subject, has plainly declared that obedience is the path to religious knowledge. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Every thoughtful man admits that the opera-



tions of the understanding are influenced by the affections, but few of us are probably sufficiently aware of the extent of this influence in religious studies. The great teachers of antiquity were particular in describing the character, which the student must possess before he could receive ethical instructions with advantage, and if virtuous dispositions were required in the investigations of human systems, how much more in the consideration of the holy and sublime truths and doctrines of Christianity. By seriousness and earnestness, by purity of motive and devout prayer, the villager before us became a proper subject for religious instruction, and because humble and sincere, he was successful. Distinguished talents and learning may be supreme in matters of human inquiry, but they are only secondary on religious and divine subjects. A popular and influential writer has stated, that she "could not meet with any system of theology which satisfied her mind." And this is very likely. It would be easier to square the circle than to adapt Christian truth to some people's tastes and demands. They are destitute of the key to the Christian temple, "a broken and a contrite heart," a heart sincerely resolved to do God's will. You cannot but notice that "faith" in these days is claimed to stand in the wisdom of men, and that the mind starts from itself as sufficient for the investigation of Scripture claims and difficulties, and proudly seeks the reduction of divine mysteries to human logic. On the other hand, Revelation tells us that "our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Your very proper question has thus given me an opportunity of opening my heart on this subject. Humility and sincerity, Christian childhood, as our Holy Redeemer has announced, is the condition of illumination and satisfaction in theological pursuits; "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." You will not for one moment suspect that I in the least depreciate in-

telleet and erudition ; they are of priceless value in the study, both of the evidences and doctrines of God's Word, when animated by genuine and fervent piety. But I mean this, that of themselves they cannot communicate a right disposition of heart, nor can they compensate for its absence. Perhaps these days of dispute and rebuke have been permitted to come to lead us to a more devout and obedient method of pursuing Christian truth, as the one God has most honoured, as it has certainly proved the safest path to religious conviction and tranquillity. The experimental guide, the sanctifying and sustaining influence of the Gospel, is blessedly sufficient for thousands, but instead of tasting of the bread of life, and drinking at the stream of salvation, too many seek to be satisfied in their own way, and ply unreasonable demands and trifling objections. They refuse to cultivate the soil till assured of its certain fruitfulness by an inspection of its strata, and an analysis of its properties, and this requires labour and research.

ALIIQUIS. I conclude you believe theology to be a true science, and that a knowledge of God is open to us. The position of the atheist I plainly see is untenable, and further, that his notions are of a ruinous tendency, "shattering the authority of conscience, sowing despondency on personal progress, casting the affections in narrow and selfish type, and dispelling the highest fascination and grandeur of the conception of truth." As another writer has said ; "There is no being eloquent for atheism ; in that exhausted receiver the mind cannot use its wings, the clearest proof that it is out of its element." I do not subscribe to the dogma that there is no God, but rather to this aspect of the question, that He is unknown and unknowable. As Mr. Maurice has shewn ; "all beliefs about God are but inadequate intellectual attempts to justify belief in Him, which is never a merely intellectual affirmation, but rather a living act of the spirit, by no



means confined to those who consciously confess his presence.\*"

NEMO. You have learnt from our previous conversations that I am a believer in the strength of Common Sense. Of course my notions will not be welcomed by the mystified and transcendental, and will be the snuff, as Shakespeare writes ;

"Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses  
All but new things disdain ; whose judgments are  
Mere feathers of their garments ; whose constancies  
Expire before their fashions."

What a jumble of things you have just given me. It is true that beliefs about God are quite different from belief in God. In the one case He may be a dark mystery to us, while having faith in Him implies a revelation of Him, however imperfect in degree. Then belief can never be a mere intellectual affirmation, but the act of a living spirit. Yet while defined to be a living act of the spirit, you say it may be exercised unconsciously, since this living act of the spirit is "by no means confined to those who consciously confess His presence." How cloudy is such theology as this, and more than cloudy, for an unconscious living act of the spirit is a palpable contradiction. Two truths let me here insist upon. One that all faith, in a scriptural and personal sense, is a known and intelligent belief in God, and in His Son whom He has sent as the means of salvation. How can there be belief by a man unless there be a consciously exercised act of trust or reliance ? Because God's Spirit is universally and continually in contact with humanity, it does not follow that a man while in sin and rebellion may be in accepted communion with this Spirit. The act of faith in the villager, to whom we have referred, was a conscious act of his spirit in the truth and provisions of the Gospel, and so must that faith ever be which bringeth salvation. This is the teaching of entire Scripture, and the burden

\* "Essays Theological and Literary." By R. H. Hutton, M.A. Preface and Essay First.

of its frequent and fervent exhortations. I well know what may here be said by those who identify the faults of professing Christians with Christianity itself, they find so much goodness without faith, and so much faith without goodness, that men had better be left without an objective revelation, and religious dogmas and profession. But all readers of the Holy Volume well know that such faith as it requires produces fruit after its kind. "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth," and these virtues cannot be true, in a divine sense, without faith in the Gospel. The second truth is, that while we cannot think adequately of God, we may know Him in part, and think of Him as Infinite. We may know God without fully comprehending Him. "There is nothing in our mental constitution to prevent us having an indefinite conception of an object of which we can form no adequate conception. On the contrary, our experience presents proof both abundant and convincing, of the possibility of indefinite and inadequate conceptions of objects not fully realized." We have no adequate notion of time and space, yet we have some notion of time and space, and can further think of them as lost in illimitableness. We may know God, and have intelligent communion with Him, without possessing faculties for constructing (as Dr. Mansel unfortunately suggested) a theory of God. How can we account for the disclosure of the God of the Bible, a God of inconceivable majesty and infinite perfection? As we shall presently learn, this must not only be accepted as proof of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, but also of the truth that man's moral nature is a revelation of God. Before either atheism or pantheism can destroy our belief in a spiritual and personal God, they must destroy the testimony of the consciousness of our own spirituality and personality. Our knowledge of even finite things is far from being clear and adequate, and what hinders that we should have a real, though still more indefinite knowledge of the Infinite? Here



then we reach the two main divisions of our controversy; I ask for faith in Holy Scripture because its spirit witnesses with our spirits, and experience verifies its truth and preciousness; and because on sufficient historical evidence it can be established, that the holy men of old who spake in all its parts, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. From the internal evidences, from the spirit and tendency of Christianity, we may be sure the Bible is true; and from external evidences also we may arrive at the same conclusion.

ALIQUIS. Not forgetting the theological and experimental aspect of the Word of God, I should like more satisfaction on the external proofs of its truth. We cannot hide from us the fact, that philosophy and science in the present day stand aloof in unfriendly attitudes, whilst literature gives currency to a thousand speculative opinions unfavourable to the old established beliefs. It is obvious that the theology of former ages cannot be permanently maintained, and that the mass of society is anxiously seeking a creed which shall not be at issue with the moral sense of educated men.

NEMO. I pray you not to think so much of such representations. Christianity has among its rejoicing believers educated men. There is a great deal of dust in such observations, perhaps not intended to blind, but certainly calculated to mislead. Even the writer you have just quoted does not go so far in his dissent from Christianity as his words seem to imply. He affirms the genuineness and authenticity of the early records of the Christian religion; his words being, "The scepticism of a former age has been refuted by the criticism of a later period; the imputation of forgery and fraud made against the evangelists by writers in the last century, has been dispelled by a more careful study of the Gospels. One remarkable characteristic of these books is the simple truthfulness with which the evangelists record the traditions therein collected; even when these traditions are unfavourable to their own

clusions." In another part of his book he writes, "The early history of Christianity may be in many respects inaccurate, exaggerated by credulous devotion, and even falsified by legendary traditions, but some Divine and indefeatable truths must be contained within its doctrines. These could not have lived through so many centuries, and spread through such various forms of civilization, if they had not their undying roots in the heart of man.\*" This, you will notice, is not the surrender of the Christian religion. Many who have written critically and animadvertingly on certain portions of the Bible, are still believers in its authority, and are ministering at the altars of our holy faith. It is true, nevertheless, that some advanced minds have eliminated the idea of a personal God, and regard Christianity as a mere product of human thought. But these are not so many in number and ability as I think you suppose.

For one, I could not ignore any portion of the Bible, and have no faith in an accommodating eclecticism, my position being this, we need not abandon Christianity on the one hand, nor seek on the other to conciliate scepticism by giving up essential points. The only choice in this matter is between a Divine Revelation and universal scepticism. Christianity is either true and Divine, or it is an imposture. If we have not a Christianity sustained by authentic documents, we have none. It claims to be a Revelation of Divine truth, and of a Divine Incarnation. Divinity sympathizing with fallen humanity, identifying Himself with it, and bearing its sins, that He may consistently with the claims of Divine justice pardon men, and make them partakers of the Divine nature; Christianity is all this, or a fabrication and delusion. I own to a surprise in reading sceptical books, that with much free handling of the Bible, and denial of some of its details, there should still be found respectful views of its claims in general, and no positive denials of its Divine origin. This appears to me incon-

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\* "Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism," by the Duke of Somerset.



sistent. They leave the premises so broad and firm that they warrant more than the lame conclusions deduced from them. An example is seen in Strauss; "No one can be more inimical to the dogmatic and historical Christianity of the Church than he; yet he asserts firmly that Christ and Christianity is the highest moral ideal to which the world can ever attain." Only on the assumption that a miracle is literally impossible, or that the evidence of the Gospel records is untrustworthy, can disbelief in the Divinity of the Christian religion be justified. But who has shewn this? Cavils and speculations are rife enough, but who has proved the impossibility of miracles, or falsified the Christian records? You must remember that while one duke in the British senate writes on the side of scepticism, another is found to write on the truth of "those things which are most surely believed among us." Very seriously I repeat to you, your reason may be brought to rest on irrefragable evidence, producible in favour of Christianity, and with the aid of a living trust of your spirit in the Gospel provisions, your heart may be tranquilized. More even than by the explicit and commanding proof of reason, will the hallowing and assuring acquisitions of faith certify that the Gospel is from God, by its harmony with your moral nature, your spiritual yearnings, and your sense of sinfulness, feebleness, and dependence. I can see nothing but hope in the revolution which the study of Christian evidences in these days has undergone; and the same I would affirm in reference to the revolution in Biblical criticism. We have nothing to fear from the minutest and severest trial of the foundations of that faith which sustained our fathers in their earthly sorrows, secured for them triumph over death, and bore them into the presence of the Living and Eternal God. Ever remember that the condition of the knowledge of God's favour is not the possession of a mighty mind, but of an humble heart, and that in His earthly as well as in His heavenly kingdom, he that is least in his own estimation, is the greatest.

ALIQUIS. It is too obvious we are living in a destructive age, and that an irreligious and sceptical spirit reigns. All the foundations of our beliefs in every department of knowledge are passing through a testing and analytical process. I should rejoice to know what really constitutes reliable evidence of the truth of the Bible. Would you oblige me by indicating the mode of investigation of the Divine Inspiration and authority of the Christian religion?

NEMO. I can place before you the grounds of my own personal faith and rejoicing in the Gospel. In the first place, albeit, you may regard it as visionary, as it is certainly untransferable, the truth of the Christian religion is to me attested and certified by its influence on my heart and life. I must gratefully avow that by a penitent faith in the provisions of the Gospel, I have been for some time the subject of a conscious transformation of character. I could not throw away my belief in the Divinity and preciousness of the Gospel of Christ, if all the world beside were to reject its truth. And one of the signs of the day is to me hopeful, that is, the value set upon internal evidence. The tendency now is to believe the history of the Gospel from the intrinsic merits of its Revelations, and the evidences of its Divinity are not so much sought for in the storm, in the earthquake, or the fire, as in the still small voice within us. The internal evidence afforded to His doctrine by the life of Jesus has a great hold of me. Then the soul satisfying possession, which faith in the merits and mediation of Christ communicates, is strong enough on my mind to carry the weight of all objections against the Biblical miracles, and also the weight of "those things hard to be understood," which I find in some of the Scriptures. I rejoice in this growing appreciation of internal evidence, which is finding its way in the most diverse inquiries. Without going far into the consideration of the relative value of external and internal evidence as applied to Revela-



tion, I may say I believe in the importance of both, yet speaking from my personal convictions, I find that the experimental evidence places Christianity beyond the reach of accidents, whether of science or criticism, and therefore I attach to it the greater weight. You will have learnt from history and observation, that the moral and spiritual truths of the Gospel, the relations between the moral law of God, and the moral conscience of man, have won for Christianity, and are every day winning for it, an entrance into the heart, not merely of the really educated, but of the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted. Yet from the importance I attach to internal evidence, I do not for a moment wish to imply, that man's imperfect reason and conscience constitute a sufficient power of judging what is, or what is not, worthy to be called inspired truth. If our reason were perfect, and our moral nature upright, then I might not be so loth to subscribe to the notion, that "our only idea of Inspiration is that which we form from our knowledge of the Bible itself." Hardly two minds will agree in declaring what the Bible actually is. Very different from this measured calculation of its value, this balancing process of induction, is that proof of its truth and excellence which accrues to a devout believer in its promises and provisions. Such an individual enjoys the fulfilment of the Divine words, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." He has that species of proof, the most convincing of all, which arises from the correspondence he feels between the blessings he needs, and those it is the office of the Saviour to supply; he has in the holy and elevating affections which Christ's religion communicates, a pledge of the super-human purity and beneficence of its author; he has the practical experience of the efficacy of His sacrifice in removing guilt from his conscience, and in diffusing an unearthly influence through his soul; he has, finally, strengthening convictions from day to day of the Redeemer's

supreme glory and preciousness, proceeding from the multiplied tokens he receives of His mercy and power. This believer may not be able, as others are, to arrange and produce illustrations of Biblical truth, compare coincidences, reconcile discrepancies, and clear up difficulties, but his soul has "entered into rest," and for one he can be sure the Bible is true.

2. Passing from the internal and invisible, I would ask you to give proper consideration to the present position and pretensions of Christianity. You will at once concede, that there is one book among us which has taken such a hold on this and other civilized countries as no other book ever did. It is in our midst proclaiming the Divinity of its origin, and the infinitude of its riches. The Bible applies to itself, certain distinct and peculiar designations. It is styled "the Scriptures," the "Holy Scriptures," the God-breathed communication to men. It is called the "Word of God," a Revelation of God's mind, and will, and truth. The voice is human, but the Word claims to be Divine, the hands that penned it were mortal, but God directed them. It was necessary that the book should be human, that all might understand it; it was necessary also that it should be Divine, that all who receive it might hear in it the very voice of God. It is not a dead letter, but a living book, since it further names itself the "Lively Oracles." God has committed to men living oracles, not dead oracles that cannot speak, but instinct with life, flashing conviction, flooding with light, pregnant with vitalizing and renewing power. If willing and obedient applicants consult these oracles, they will directly and of themselves respond, speaking to their hearts, and imparting instruction, and life, and blessing. Many things may be said of the Bible which cannot be said of any other book in the world, and this of itself is sufficient to awaken the inquiry, whence came it?

ALIQUIS. But are there not professedly other sacred



books in existence, and some of them of unquestionable antiquity and wide-spread influence ?

NEMO. Superstition boasts of its documents, nor need we dispute either their age or their power. But these so-called sacred books have in certain countries survived in virtue of their adaptation to fallen humanity, and have been kept from extinction by flattering the pride, or fostering the inclinations of their believers. Their tenacity of existence is not the tenacity of life ; they are stationary, imperative, and destitute of migratory influence. The religions of India, of China, of Arabia, and of barbarism, have experienced an immemorial calm, broken only by the disturbances of military conquest, or Christian teaching. What piles of the world's so-called sacred writings have perished, or become mere curiosities of literature. The spectres of mythologies, superstitions, or classical speculations, may still haunt some regions, but they are becoming less distinct and are passing away. In contrast with all these rivals, how resplendently does the Bible shine forth. Its scheme of religion is a world-wide fact, and has secured for itself vitality and power in every civilized land. The ancient religion of Brahminism, Bhuddism, and Mahometanism, have shewn no disposition to propagate themselves, while Christianity labours for a universal diffusion, and is going forth "conquering, and to conquer." From the beginning it has had to struggle against persecution, steering its course in the teeth of human vices, and against the strength of the world's enmity, and of its highest civilization. You will remember that the ancient books to which you have referred, have never borne the test of civilization and literature. How they shrink from the intelligent gaze of mankind. But in this world of change, of enlightenment, of fierce opposition to purity, and of revolution and death, the presence of the Bible in our midst should lead us, I judge, to recognize a cause that is supernatural. It has been found in advance of every age,

and will be to the end of time. As a system of objective truth it admits of no improvement, and of no increase. There are no heights, nor depths in morality, in civilization, and human learning, not included in it. Whatever eminence and excellence the mind reaches, it is already there, beckoning to grander heights. "I affirm that the Inspired Word is so framed as to be found consistent with the science and literature of ages long posterior to its own. I put it as a problem which only the Omniscient can solve, how a revelation which is to range over centuries of comparative ignorance on matters of secular and mundane science, and is necessarily, according to its plan, to mix up these matters with its higher themes,—is to be so constructed and so recorded that it shall not anticipate human discoveries, and yet shall be in entire harmony with them, as in the course of time they emerge. I maintain that this precise problem is found actually solved, in point of fact, in the Bible. And I draw the inference that this implies its plenary, verbal inspiration. The reason is plain enough, according to my view. Only One seeing the end from the beginning could so adjust the language used as, on the one hand, to make it tell the men of the existing generation no more than they otherwise knew of astronomical, or geological, or other natural truth, and yet, on the other hand, to make it such that the men of all future generations should be able in the long run, and without violence, to explain it satisfactorily in the light of their clearer and fuller information, and their more advanced and accurate science\*."

Let me ask you to ponder the power the Bible possesses in the world at the present hour. Think of its hold on the institutions and domestic habits of modern Europe. States are founded on its principles, and kings rule by compacts based upon its commandments. There is no form of guilt which the provisions

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\* Dr. Candlish.



of the Bible have not vanquished, no intensity of anguish which they have not assuaged. In every land, in public and private stations, and in contact with every type of mind, it has been fruitful of the highest thoughts, counselled and achieved in man self-conquest, and promoted exalted excellence of character. The unfailing applicability of Scripture truths to mankind, makes the influence of the Bible universal, and proves it to be not only a simple collection of books, but the Book for the world. On mere human principles, how can you account for the marvellous influence Jewish literature and Jewish records have had, on every civilized country for the last eighteen hundred years? The Egyptians, and the Assyrians, and the Romans of bygone ages, despised the Jews as ignorant and inferior people, and yet from the despised of nations and of history, has emanated the Book which for thousands of years has held kingdoms spell-bound. Let me suppose for a moment, that you accept the teaching of our day as given in some quarters, that the Bible is a mere human book, or that there is something wrong and uncertain about it; and no sufficient reason can then be assigned for its unique and extraordinary power on the human mind, and the affairs of mankind. As the Alps would be on the plains of Holland, so is the Bible among other books. Its marvellous force among men, its heart-searching, penetrating, and transforming might, is a phenomenon among writings which must be satisfactorily accounted for. Multitudes innumerable in every generation, and everywhere, have bowed before its energy. It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Deny to the Bible a supernatural origin and energy, and you have an effect for which you cannot assign an adequate cause. And further, remove this miracle of books, and where are we? No Divine Saviour, no forgiveness of sins. No

God to hear prayer, no hope in death, no future of blessed being. Rob the earth of the Bible, and you plunge it in midnight gloom. Yet you hear now and then, that even if true Christianity is not necessary, or is obsolete. Nothing can be found however to take its place, and help fallen and afflicted humanity. Are you prepared for this? If God's Word be not true altogether, then the whole must be surrendered, and man be bereft of salvation and hope. Not overlooking the different degrees of importance which belong to different portions of religion, there seems no middle course. The beautiful visions which are flitting before men's minds, the lights which guide and cheer them, are either the borrowed, but unacknowledged, beams, or stray reflections, of this glorious orb of truth. "It is capable of historic verification that the high moral influences which have animated some forms of heathen philosophy and religion, have emanated from the great foci of light and spiritual intelligence, which exerted their first and almighty influence upon Hebrew and Christian mind, and that age after age the light has shone in darkness, though the darkness comprehended it not." In assigning to Holy Scripture a Divine origination and power, we account for its marvellous position in the world; but deny to it this association, and you will find yourself in thick darkness, for the difficulties of scepticism are far more formidable than the alleged difficulties of faith. If we cannot be sure that the Bible is true, we cannot be sure of any event of history, nor any evidence of human testimony.

3. As another preliminary, I ask you to weigh the opposition the Holy Volume has survived. From the beginning it has been severely tested, and had its foundations been human, long ago it would have shared the fate of imposture and fiction. It cannot be gainsayed, although it is a statement to cause surprise, that no book has been so resisted and reviled as the Bible. Searching inquiry, profound learning, and



oppressive persecutions, have been employed for its destruction. In a thousand ways it has been challenged, denied, attacked, vilified. But what can be found in the Bible to excite all this assault? It seeks to be every man's friend, and as the champion of liberty, the promoter of civilization, and purifier of morals, it labours to secure our highest earthly interests. The secret of opposition to it is a spiritual one, for I would place scepticism nearer the heart than the head. It frowns upon sin, and warns of a tremendous doom, and is not this the brunt of its offence? Further, is not the resistance it provokes the verification of its own prophecies; "that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts?" I fear that the sceptical thought of the age will lead many astray, and ruin many souls, but be assured that the Divine claims of the Bible cannot be refuted, nor its living testimonies silenced, nor its triumphs prevented. If the Divine origin and authority of Holy Scripture has passed unimpaired through the hands of such men as Celsus, and Porphyry, and Julian, men who lived so near the time and spot whence Christianity sprang; if it has forced its way with widening power, and brightening lustre, through the strongest arrests of opposition, of criticism, and of science, we have little to fear in these times. The amazing progress of Christianity during the first three centuries, though poverty and infamy, distress and opposition, the loss of liberty and of life, were often the lot of its professors,—evinces an intrinsic excellence and a strength of evidence demonstrative of its unearthly character. I say it with gratitude to God, and with assurance, if the violent and persistent penetrations of past ages have failed to undermine the Christian rock, modern opposers will not succeed, for that rock has been consolidating itself year by year, and every storm that has been raised, and every tempest that has raged around it, has only served to grapple it more impreguably to that sure foundation on which rests immovably

the Throne of the Living God. This proof of Christianity, which arises from the sufferings of its first disciples, appears to me to be deserving of great consideration. Strong evidence of the existence of miracles, and of the veracity of the record concerning them, lies in the character and persecutions of the witnesses. Under the conviction of the reality of those miraculous powers which they had seen, they proclaimed to the world the amazing history and doctrine of their Divine Master, and in spite of imprisonment and spoliation, with the terror of a cruel martyrdom before their eyes, they persisted in bearing the same invariable testimony, saying; "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Unless we can suppose them to have acted on principles utterly different from all other men, they must have been impelled by facts, such as they relate, to testify those facts to the world in defiance of accumulated sufferings. Viewed in any other light, their conduct is inexplicable, and becomes itself a greater miracle than any which they recorded. Examples of this moral heroism have from the first accompanied Christianity, and cannot but prove to us that a Divine force possessed the minds of its witnesses, and that the hand of God has been outstretched to preserve His church. I know you will tell me of the martyrs of superstition, of delusion, and visionary speculations. But these spasms of human nature are very different from the calm, holy, intelligent,—and century after century recurring—examples of Christian confessors and sufferers. It was something more, surely, than a sublime theory, or enthusiasm, that enabled them to endure torture and death, not merely with patience, but with triumph, not merely with silence, but with exultation.

4. As introductory to the main body of Christian evidences let me ask your attention to another observation. We find in the writings of the highest antiquity religions only of the imagination. The inquirers of



those times avoided the delineations of a religion for man, from a sense of the difficulty of attaining truth. The Mahometan theory must be placed in another category, for it is confessedly largely borrowed from the Christian religion. On the other hand the Jewish and Christian Scriptures claim not to be the investigation of truth, but its revelation, and enunciate clearly and positively a religion for man. These writings speak not so much of the love of truth generally, as the love of that truth which they reveal, and this prominently, their exposition of the truth of God and of Christ. The truth is declared by them to have been given to them, and they exhort their readers to walk in the truth, to do the truth, to do the deeds of the truth. Two things are noticeable in the New Testament Scriptures. Christ who came in the fulness of time bore explicit and repeated testimony to the verity and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures; and on the eve of His departure He solemnly asserted there would be the continuation and fuller revelations to His disciples of the Spirit of Truth. In both Testaments there is an appeal to truth, the writers frequently prefacing their communications with "Thus saith the Lord," and everywhere affirming they were moved and taught of God. You find language like this; "For this cause thank we God, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God. He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath given unto us His Holy Spirit." How explicit is the following, "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." These are august pretensions, these statements of the disclosure of divine and absolute truth. The sacred writers further assert that their communications are exclusive and final. No others writings but theirs, they declare, have come from God, and no other

to the end of time, will come. In considering the claims of a book we are bound I judge to weigh the account which itself gives of its origin and contents. Is there a Revelation from the Creator? Then man must find it out, he must listen and obey. What accountable being can escape the solemn responsibility bound up with the announcement, with the *rumour* even, that God has condescended to speak to man? If the Bible be not of God, there is no certain and saving truth in the world; on the other hand, if proof of its divine origin can be furnished, that man incurs a serious responsibility who trifles with it, or seeks to lessen its influence among men.

5. Here I must say a word on the manner and temper with which Christian evidences ought to be sought. The subjects of Holy Scripture are of transcendent grandeur, and of inconceivable import. Any manifestation which God may be pleased to make of Himself, should be considered with reverent and dutiful teachableness. The likelihood of a Revelation, supplemental to creation and providence, and coming to us by extraordinary interpositions of goodness and power, is of itself calculated to awaken our interest and reverence. The design of the Sacred Volume is most gracious and momentous. It is the fountain-head of spiritual life and intelligence to a ruined and lost world. It is the Divinely prepared and certain panacea for the evils and sufferings of our race. It is the call of love, the tender entreaty of His Heavenly Father to the wandering prodigal to return to the happiness and festivities of his long lost home. Man might have been left to himself, left to the deepening shadows of gloom, which were leading him to the pit of everlasting darkness and despair. But God did not leave him. He pierced the gloom, and dispersed the clouds which hung over his path, imparting celestial rays, and heavenly visions to enlighten and cheer. He has broken the silence of nature, and has "talked with us from heaven." The great reason why men do not



feel the power and beauty of the Bible is, they do not realize the terrible evil which the Bible has come to cure. It contains supernatural and undiscoverable information on serious, moral and spiritual subjects. It answers that greatest of all questions; "What must I do to be saved?" But it is too much a fashion in these days to go to Holy Scripture, not to hear with humble gladness what God the Lord shall speak, but to cavil, to find fault, and accept so much as human reason shall conceive to be necessary. How can the power and excellence of Scripture be understood by that which is "sensual, having not the Spirit"? To the utmost I would encourage intellectual examinations of Holy Writ, but in concert with sincerity, humility, and prayer. God has breathed Himself into these heavenly compositions, and is ever ready to unfold His character to honest and devout students. "To this man will I look," saith the Lord, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." We acknowledge there are mysteries in the Sacred Volume, apparent discrepancies, and many things hard to be understood. But what are these but proofs of its celestial origin, demonstrations that a Being mightier than man has traced its outlines, and supplied its stores? Must not the relation of the finite to the Infinite, the creature to the Creator, be full of difficulties? Had it been the work of the human intellect, it might have been easily intelligible, without perplexities and inequalities. Look at nature, and there you find the awful, the rugged, the profound. The Bible has proceeded from the same source, and we should not hesitate to accept it when we find there analogous variations, pauses, silences, lights, and shades. There are mysteries into which even the angels desire to look. The existence of difficulties cannot, therefore, be a valid presumption against the truth of Revelation. These difficulties are few indeed in comparison with the creed that this Revelation is not of God. The sober experience and teaching of

Augustine may well guide us in these later days; "I have learned I confess to pay such deference to the canonical books of Scripture, and to them alone, that I most firmly believe that none of their writers have ever fallen into any error in writing. And if I meet with any thing in them which seems to me to be contrary to truth, I doubt not that either the manuscript is in fault, or that the translator has missed the truth, or that I myself have not rightly apprehended it."

In these prefatory remarks I have been trying to shew you that the Bible is unlike all other books, and that very many things may be said of it, with perfect truth, which cannot, as I have before observed, be said of any other book. It stands at an immeasurable distance from every other in its versatility, and in its unity; in its high morality, and in its sublime theology; in its exquisite and unfailing adaptations to mankind, and in its direct and fearless appeals to the highest conscience and reason of man. How is it that this book surpasses all others in the admiration and homage it has received from the great, the wise, and the good? How is it that it has survived the most determined and persistent combinations for its damage and removal? Its friends answer, because it is God's Book, and has upon it the broad refulgent stamp of Divinity. An invisible and vital guardianship surrounds it, and its enemies may as well attempt to pluck the sun from the firmament, and upheave the pillars of the universe, as destroy the Bible. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."



## II.

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ALIQUIS. Have you any further clue to the secret of scepticism in these days? Would you state what you deem the cause of opposition to the Christian faith and records?

NEMO. Your query would lead me to the consideration of the natural history of religious doubt. There are degrees of an unfriendly attitude towards God's Book. Perhaps I should not call them all unfriendly attitudes. Unbelief, scepticism, infidelity; are three words which it would be well to discriminate. I would speak of them in the order just given; unbelief, the not accepting the truth of the Gospel, leads to scepticism, which is a state of doubting and questioning, and too frequently ends in confirmed infidelity. Hence we see the peril of indifference to the claims and invitations of the Gospel. How many in this position are found an easy prey to doubt and temptation?

ALIQUIS. But is belief, or unbelief, a moral question, and a matter for either approbation or blame? When a proposition is presented to a man, he believes or disbelieves it, according as the thing appears to him probable or improbable, true or false. How can he be responsible for the way in which it strikes him, or for the judgment he forms?

NEMO. I am frequently told by young men that they cannot help doubting and disbelieving on Biblical and religious subjects, and they deem it unreasonable that unbelief should be the object of God's displeasure, or faith of His approbation. But on this point the testimony of Holy Scripture is clear. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not shall not see life." "If ye believe not that I am He," said the same Blessed Redeemer, "ye shall die in your sins." Then remember how solemnly St. Paul cautions his brethren; "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." It is evident that the opinions you have just broached are at direct variance with the whole tenor of the Gospel of Christ. That Gospel plainly states that our pardon and salvation depend on our faith. We have before agreed, I suppose, that the emotions and desires of the heart play an important part in guiding our thoughts and judgments. Every one of us by nature possesses "an evil heart," a wrong moral bias, a tendency to evil. Therefore, if the mechanism of the human intellect be not in a virtuous and healthy condition, it is likely to judge erroneously, and hold to its secret loves and preferences. Man's reason is not like a balance which weighs with strict exactness that which is presented to it; on the contrary, it is too often biassed by feelings, by acquired habits, by hope, or fear, or imagination. "It is one thing," says Whateley, "to wish to have truth on our side, and another thing to wish sincerely to be on the side of truth." The whole practice of the world illustrates the fact, that belief or unbelief are in a great measure moral qualities, and that men are held responsible for them, and for all the consequences, good or evil, which result from them. "If a man about to cross a river sees a notice that it is dangerous to pass, but thinks he knows better, and disbelieves it, and is drowned, all persons will acknowledge that he lost his life through



his own wilfulness. If a man embark his fortune in a foolish speculation, in spite of the advice and remonstrances of his friends, and so ruins himself and his family, it is not held to be sufficient excuse that he did not believe his friends, but thought himself wiser." Some men, by a mental convulsion, as it were, pass from a state of unbelief, or religious indifferentism, into positive infidelity, and afterwards point the finger of scorn at those who still believe in the unseen and supernatural relations of God to the human soul. It may be difficult to precisely recount the causes of their sad relapse and departure from God and His truth. But their state of indecision on religious matters had much to do with it, their neglect of duty had something more, and perhaps the engrossing study of science, the catastrophes occasioned by nature's laws, and the darkening perception of the manner in which the gradual growth of knowledge seems to lessen the region of the supernatural, completed their revolution of feeling, and removed their anchor ground of belief.

The causes therefore of that destructive criticism with which the Christian religion is now assailed, are of two kinds; Satanic and human. There is serious significance to be attached to the representations of the apostle; "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." With the Scriptures in our hands we need not hesitate to attribute not only indirectly and originally, but distinctly and perpetually, the existence of sin in our world, to the operation of the Evil Spirit, and regard every attempt to thwart the truth of God, and destroy the kingdom of righteousness, as the suggestion and agency of this same Evil Spirit. Our lives are invested with great solemnity, and in union with God will alone be found our hope of deliverance and salvation. Van Mildert, in

his "Boyle Lectures," so exclusively dilated on the direct operation of Satan in the origin and prevalence of infidelity, that his opponents charged him with Manichæism. Perhaps in these days we are in danger of understating this invisible and solemn agent of infidelity ; nevertheless, we must not forget intermediate agents. This general and supernatural cause must be considered in the region in which it works, and in the instruments it employs. We must then also consider the human causes of opposition to the Christian Faith, these being both moral and intellectual. These are the agencies visible in actual history. Psychology teaches us that the emotions operate immediately on the will, and the will on the intellect ; hence the emotion of dislike, is able through the will, to prejudice the judgment, and cause disbelief of a doctrine against which it is directed. The evidence of religion being probable evidence, not demonstrative, offers opportunity for the subtle influence of moral causes, where at first sight intellectual might seem alone to act. You will see then how the nature of the Christian religion presents distasteful features to a man of immoral or unspiritual life. It is such a man's *apparent* interest to find Christianity untrue, and he cannot, with his tastes and proclivities, but dislike its positive and holy injunctions. It is certain that sinful tastes and habits bring with them temptations to unbelief.

ALIQUIS. That is a little severe. Your language seems to imply that every one who cannot accept the truth of Christianity must be perverse and wicked.

NEMO. I should be sorry to say that in this broad direct way. I believe a little in "honest doubt," and do not imagine that any sinfulness can be attached to the mere scepticism of inquiry. But a conscientious mind will use its utmost endeavours to find the truth, and the utmost caution not to communicate needlessly its doubts to others. Yet, tell me how to speak of men (for my remarks refer only to such) possessed of the



opportunities of acquiring knowledge on the Divine claims of the Bible, but who incline more to the pursuit of objections on these subjects, than to a calm and self-denying survey of Christian evidences? On two grounds then I account for much of the religious indifference and disbelief in these days; first on the ground of prejudice and disobedience, and secondly on that of ignorance.

(a.) Remember the Bible is a holy book, its requirements are pure, spiritual, and strict. It frowns upon ungodliness, and threatens with appalling penalties. We must invest with a great depth of meaning such a statement as the following, given us by the Saviour; "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." The existence, to a great extent, of infidelity, is clearly the development of the natural heart, the manifestation of its pride and insubordination. And here you have the philosophy of much plausible scepticism. What a relief would it be to the wicked man if the Bible were found to be untrue; what a load it would take from his conscience, what darkness from his forebodings! As long as it remains it is a reproof and a warning to him. Easy-going, indulgent, and unspiritual men, do not sap the foundation of the Divinity of the Bible, nor shatter the bulwarks of its evidences, by masterly argument or reasoning; they go a much easier way about it, and get rid of its claims by appealing to their feelings, and since they wish it to be untrue, they announce it is so, and in too many instances manifest a dogged spirit of invective, and of proselytism. The desire of the heart, and not the scrutiny and judgment of the mind, is the mighty weapon they wield! It is humbling to find, as we are compelled sorrowfully to conclude, that prejudice has so largely contributed to the infidelity of those polite, and apparently ingenuous writers, who have ventured openly to attack the Bible, or sought to lower its inspiration. We

are not permitted to read desires, and disclose the secrets of the heart, but we do know that hidden dislikes have a darkening, suspicious, and withering influence; stifling conviction, repressing inquiry, and so bewildering their victims as to cause them to call truth error, and light darkness. We do know, that a man may wilfully exclude knowledge, and be led to believe and trust a delusion. There is the love of novelty of thought, the desire to be different from others, and to be freed from what are called superstitions. There is the assumption of superiority and independence, succeeded by a contemptible repose on the dogmas of scepticism, as if every light in the universe had been searched, and infidelity was the certain result. All this I say, while readily admitting that there are some to be found who have attacked the Christian religion, whose character and lives forbid the surmise that their unbelief was intended as an excuse for licentiousness. But moral causes are generally so intertwined with the intellectual, that the utmost charity will not allow us to keep them apart, except in rare instances. Ingratitude is a chilling and darkening emotion, directly leading to indifference to the claims of God. The idea of accountability does not arouse such persons, and instead of pursuing truth with all honest eagerness, some frivolous objection, some fancied difficulty, some subtle suggestion, restrains them, and their moral nature becomes sluggish and careless, and they dream of coming off at the last with as fair deserts as other doubters, and especially as those of hollow and hypocritical believers of the Bible. "A man who has contracted evil habits, who knows he has contracted them, but has not the will or energy to shake them from him, such a man is tempted to cherish a secret scepticism and strives like the foolish ostrich to escape the destruction that awaits him by blinding his eyes against it." These, then, are some of the moral developments of opposition to the Biblical truths and records, these are tendencies to a stolid, or it may be, noisy infidelity, these are the un-



foldings of the "heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

(*b.*) Another fruitful source of infidelity is ignorance, that is, ignorance of the real and positive evidences of Holy Scripture. Many are accustomed to express an unqualified condemnation of it, who never read it, nor a book in its defence. They do not "Search the Scriptures" for themselves; they do not penitently implore God's mercy and help, and thus strive to obtain a personal and experimental acquaintance with inspired truth, but carelessly adopt a number of objections, and then refuse to have them removed. How many youths coming to this University fall an easy prey to scepticism? We are living in a vague, misty, and faithless liberalism of opinion, and resistance to authority of all kinds is encouraged. The youth makes his appearance among doubters full of cavils and lax notions. Jokes about the Bible, puns on Scripture names, and ridicule of Scripture incidents, are heard in common talk. He has before read in some of the clever articles and speeches in our newspapers irreverent allusions to Holy Scripture. Perhaps he has to encounter some direct and bold assault. Unbelief is thus suggested, and in his case how can it be resisted? He has not, it may be, the evidence of Christian consciousness as a living corroboration of Scripture truth; and further, his attention perchance has not been called to the historical and literary difficulties which are advanced against the inspiration and authority of the Scripture writers. Possibly he has just heard of the Tübingen School of criticism, and of some historic uncertainties urged by these critics, of theological disputes on the doctrine of vicarious atonement, and on the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. These and other matters he may be more or less acquainted with; but what is to prevent the shipwreck of his Christian faith? For what is his faith? At the best it is a heterogeneous mixture of historical, rational, sentimental, and ances-

tral impressions. His faith is not the gift of God, nor the conclusion from a comprehensive investigation of historic and dogmatic Christianity. He may recover the shock his faith receives by subsequent research, and so master Christian evidences as to acquire a faith impregnable to doubt. But too many never recover the shock. Should there not be, in these perilous days, provision for a training in Christian evidences along with the training in classical and mathematical knowledge? You know that the above representations of youthful collegians are only too true. Numbers of them become sportive and jubilant unbelievers, well-nigh in perfect ignorance of evidences which the wisest and most upright of men accept as trustworthy and sufficient. You cannot doubt the possibility of mere banter and ridicule soon changing a youth's unfortified faith into disbelief and infidelity. It would be well if conversational classes on Christian Evidences under the management of some master mind were established in most of our colleges. A little guidance at the most critical period of existence might be of paramount advantage. "The absence of catechetical instruction is one of the great defects of our day, one from which the next generation will greatly suffer. On this point the testimony of the (elder) Rev. John Clayton is valuable. In his old age he was often heard to say that, after an observation, and not a careless one, of men and things for half a century, he had never known an instance of one thoroughly grounded in the Assembly's Catechism, either among ministers or private Christians, who had turned aside into the paths of error.\*"

A man affects to despise the Bible, to condemn it, to oppose it. He assumes then, to say the least, a serious and startling position. Though he doubts, it may be Divine, and he is bound by a thousand obligations to consider its claims. The Bible may be true,

\* "Memorials of the Clayton Family," by Rev. T. W. Aveling, p. 76.



and since he refuses himself to examine it, he ought to ponder what others have got to advance in its defence, before he can honestly and intelligently give his judgment. It presents on his own hypothesis a phenomenon so wonderful, and a fabrication so triumphant and sublime, that something more than alleged difficulties, profane scoffs, and apparent discrepancies of statement and chronology are required to vindicate his opposition to the undisputed demonstration of its great hold on the heart and mind of the nations of the earth. I know you will tell me of various readings, of contradictions, of doubts arising from scientific investigation, and of mysteries ; but all these have been searchingly examined by learned and trustworthy men, who have still heartily adopted the divine inspiration and truth of God's Word. A fine illustration of my meaning is furnished in the case of the pious Bengel, author of the "Gnomon of the New Testament." The labour of his life to fix the text of the New Testament was prompted by a doubt purely intellectual in its origin, in consequence of perceiving the variety of readings in the sacred text. With untiring carefulness he thoroughly sifted the reality and result of these various readings, but they did not lead him to abandon or doubt the inspiration of the sacred books. You know what variations occur in our ancient classical works, although not one of them has been copied as often, by thousands of times, as the Bible. A few important various readings have resulted it is granted, yet the text is found more pure than Christian believers could have ventured to hope. After his long and laborious search, Bengel thus wrote to his scholar, Reuss ; "Eat the Scripture bread in simplicity, just as you have it ; and do not be disturbed if here and there you find a grain of sand which the mill-stone may have suffered to pass. If the Holy Scriptures which have been so often copied were absolutely without variations, this would be so great a miracle that faith in them would

be no longer faith. I am astonished, on the contrary, that from all these transcriptions there has not resulted a greater number of various readings." If such students as Bengel, and Lardner, and Leslie, and Paley, and others, who devoted their lives to the investigation of the claims of the Bible, and of which they have produced such unanswerable vindications; if such men as these, after an honest and careful examination, had rejected the Bible; then infidelity might have boasted. But the individual cannot be found who, after having devoutly searched the Scriptures, and honestly searched also their evidences, has not risen up from such a survey with an overwhelming conviction of their divine truth, scarcely to have been surpassed, had even an angel been despatched from the Throne of God itself, to have assured him personally of their celestial origin and authority.

If I had the ear of this young collegian, when on the point of surrendering the Christian faith, I would say to him, wait a little, if you cannot answer the difficulties suggested, they have been answered, and can be answered again. The book on "Modern Scepticism," by the Duke of Somerset, which appears to have made quite an impression upon some whom I know, abounds, as I judge, with many contradictions and weaknesses. The book speaks, you may remember, of "divine and indefeasible truths" in the Bible, and it remarks of the evangelists, "their truthfulness offers a striking contrast to the conduct of subsequent ecclesiastic historians." The writer makes a poor attempt, however, to separate his "indefeasible truths" from his assumed legendary and other accretions, which, in the course of time, have been mixed up with them. His Grace finds in his investigations at least four stumbling-blocks, which evidently disconcert and bewilder him—the existence of Satan, and the references in Scripture to demoniacal agency; the narratives of the manifestations connected with the nativity and bap-



tism of Jesus ; the miraculous conception of Christ ; and certain discrepancies which exist between the account of St. Paul's life and opinions, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, when compared with his own statements in the Epistles. Now all these paraded difficulties have repeatedly been met by divines and critics ; there is nothing new in them, and books might be named in which they are plainly explained and accounted for. I would say with great respect, that the Duke's work has been written in ignorance of compositions which fairly settle the questions he raises and the inconsistencies he alleges. "Pertness and ignorance," says Bishop Horne, "may ask a question in three lines which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer, and when this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written on the subject." The first great struggle of reason and learning against the authority of the Christian religion extended from the second to the fourth century, and was characterized by much critical sagacity and immense erudition, especially by Porphyry, who lived from about A.D. 233 to 305. Now, I venture to state that, while infidelity has changed some of its tactics, and has found some new imaginary grounds of opposition to the Gospel, the drama of history repeats itself, and the attacks of the first centuries are reproduced in modern doubt and exegesis. The Christian Fathers vigorously grappled with the phases of unbelief in their day, and have left us treatises which may be profitably read as replies to the modern school of free thought and of destructive criticism. And let me further say here, that theoretical sceptics, in their assaults upon Christianity, waste their time and power on side issues, in which, if even successful, its essentials would remain untouched. "We readily grant, to a certain degree, that we should not be deprived of Christ even if we had not John's Gospel. The Christian Church existed at least half a centu

though under totally different circumstances, without this Gospel having lived and flourished. I am, indeed, of the firm opinion that the first three Gospels prove sufficiently that Christ is infinitely more than the theology of the present day would make of Him, so long as we are permitted to receive their accounts without mutilation, and without being met at each of their expressions that has a superhuman character by the dogmatic utterance, "As for me, I do not believe that Jesus spoke these words." Further, if there be left in our hands only the four Pauline Epistles, whose authenticity even the Tübingen school could not deny—I mean those to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians—I can justify my faith in the supernatural origin of Christianity, and in the superhuman character of its founder with them alone.\*

ALIIQUIS. I am anxious to listen to your views on inspiration. In what respects, and to what extent, are we to regard the Bible as a divine book? Must we accept all the Bible as true, or only portions of it?

NEMO. An intelligent and satisfactory answer may be returned to your inquiry. This question, since the Reformation, has been elevated to a vast importance, as the authority of the Bible has been substituted for the authority of the Church. In the earliest times, with few exceptions, the belief in a plenary Inspiration was universal. Afterwards, and in our day, two lower forms of inspiration appear. Some writers, the broad school theologians, admit that the inspiration ought to be regarded as pertaining only to religion, the proper material of a revelation, and that the value of the religious element in this revelation would not be lessened, if errors were admitted in the scientific and miscellaneous matters which accompany it. The still broader school teach that the Bible does not, even in its religious elements, differ in kind from other books, but only in degree. These three theories of inspiration appear to

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\* "St. John's Gospel," J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D. p. 9.



me to include all to which we need refer. You will have noticed, however, that from all the parties these theories represent, warm eulogies, and sometimes surprisingly vivid and beautiful verbal honours, are poured upon the Bible. "The grand old Book" is the subject of many a boast, and of many a splendid panegyric. But why is the Bible a "grand old Book" at all, coming to us as it does from an unliterary people, if it be not throughout miraculous in its origin, and different in kind from even the highest forms of unassisted human intelligence? Why is it so? Tell me how you account for the marvellous force of the Bible in the world, for its inexhaustible strength, its manifold adaptations, its spiritual and abiding hold on the hearts and consciences of mankind?

(a.) You have very properly rejected the dream of atheism, and I need add little to the words you have employed. No conviction can be more ennobling than the one which realizes the existence of an Almighty Ruler, a righteous, merciful, and personal living God. The soul of man is protected and cheered in the recognition of a Being of infinite power and infinite love. Here conscience finds its authority, reason its foundation, taste its luxury, life its solace, and hope its inspiration. Having reached this august and harmonizing truth, the inquiry almost involuntarily suggests itself, has this blessed Being ever spoken to man? Look that question in the face. Has the living God ever revealed Himself, additionally to His works in creation and His rule in providence? Has the silence of nature ever been broken by communications from the Creator to His creatures? - Nothing is more natural than yearnings and inquiries after such communications. From many considerations it might be shown that a revelation of truth and duty, adapted to man's nature and destiny, is necessary. The impossibility of learning the moral will of God from the glorious, but mute, works of creation, and the utter want of authority

that must attach to all human teaching, demonstrate the need of a divine and authoritative standard of doctrine and commandment.

(b.) Then you will acknowledge, I am sure, that communications from God to man are possible. That the Creator has power over His own creatures, and access to them as He pleases, appears a rational conclusion. By secret illuminations of the mind, by sensible appearances, or by voices, God can reveal His truth and law to man. One human mind reveals its secrets and thoughts to another, and although spirit in man is impalpable and inscrutable, the manifestations of its realness are certified in its effects. The teaching of our ethical consciousness is, that our relation to God is as the relation of a person to a person. Man is conscious of his freedom, and also of a distinct and separable personality. It is thus that man reveals God, his free will enables him to conceive God as a free agent; his personal consciousness enables him to ascribe personality to God; and his moral consciousness to give to Him a spiritual and moral nature. "Man by his intelligence rises above nature, and, in virtue of this intelligence, is conscious of himself as a power not only independent of, but opposed to, nature, and capable of resisting, conquering, and controlling her. As man has a living faith in this power, superior to nature, which dwells in him, so has he a belief in God, a feeling, an experience of His existence." Admitting, then, that God is a living, real, personal Spirit, there can be no natural impossibility in His holding direct communion with the human soul, and in influencing that soul according to His own will and purpose. Especially so when you remember that the universe is governed not only by physical, but by moral laws, for so it must be, if man's religious nature be at all taken into account.

(c.) You will concede further, I judge, the probability of moral communications from God to man. The



consciousness of penitence and religious desire in man form ground for hope in God's merciful interference. It is reasonable to suppose that He who has provided so liberally for the body would impart some information respecting man's religious necessities. The conviction of a free personality, and of a moral nature in God, make it most probable that He would not leave his intelligent offspring to wander on in darkness and endless doubt. Every man has a consciousness of sin and wrong doing, but without a Revelation, there would be no hope, for nature has no voice with which to answer prayer, and no agency to promote the religious welfare of men. "Working without will, she takes counsel neither of the good nor of the beautiful, casting up from her dark abyss only eternal transformations of herself, unconsciously and without end ; furthering, with the same ceaseless industry, decline and increase, death and life—never producing what alone is of God and what supposes liberty—the virtuous, the immortal."

Now, I do think we may rationally conclude that this is not the unhappy position of the human race. Pondering the yearnings and expectations of mankind, considering the necessity, possibility, and probability of the interference of a God of infinite benevolence and wisdom, on behalf of His highest workmanship, and considering that man's consciousness seems adapted to be used by God as an instrument of inspiration, the conclusion is well-nigh self-evident that there must be a moral and spiritual Revelation from heaven. If not, materialism, atheism, and fatalism, are our only rulers. Man becomes a moral machine, and nature a physical engine. Sorrow for evil doing seems unreasonable, mind is only a higher form of matter, immortality disappears, and God becomes a personification of the universe, an impersonal existence or principle, and therefore no God at all. I see no escape from these dismal consequences, but by a belief in the existence of a Revelation of mercy and of good from a Divine

and Spiritual Personality, which our Saviour has taught us to call,—“Our Father which is in Heaven.”

ALIQUIS. I cannot but see the Bible must have some connection with the Supernatural. Considering its intrinsic excellence, its rapid and extensive influence in Gentile regions, notwithstanding the early and continued opposition of its foes, its triumphs over severe and repeated examinations, and its present indisputable power in the earth; considering these things I could not divest the Bible of a Divine association, and I believe many of my school of thought will go quite as far. There must be a Divinity in it, and with it. It would be absolutely so singular, and without any parallel on earth, if only a human production, that its alleged mysteriousness would be inconceivably increased. But my point is, not the rejection of the Bible, but a desire to know the nature and extent of its inspiration. If altogether inspired, it will be altogether true, and yet so many discrepancies and contradictions are arrayed against it, that I am almost driven to the conclusion it is only partially inspired.

NEMO. To account for the Holy Volume we must enter the region of the miraculous. We are driven to it as a necessity. But before we proceed further, as I have intimated, it will be right to hear what the Book has to say for itself. It clearly asserts its claim to be an inspired book, and the whole system of the religion it teaches is based upon the assumed fact, of a supernatural intervention of God in the revelation of its truth and doctrines. The sacred writers unquestionably ascribe their compositions to Divine light and authority. The following is the Bible's account of its own origin; “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” David says; “the spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.” The prophets frequently usher in their message by the solemn announcement, “Thus saith the Lord,” or “The



Lord hath spoken." Sometimes the Lord speaks direct ; "Hear now my words." The new Testament writers distinctly refer to the inspiration of the Older Canon ; "The Lord spake by the mouth of His holy prophets ;" and again ; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." You will remember also some of our previous citations, in which the Apostles affirm, that they wrote in the clear consciousness of their supernatural relation to God, and sought a cordial reception of their communications "not as the word of man, but as the word of God." St. Peter writes as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ," and classes the writings of Paul with the other Scriptures. He further writes ; "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour." Here we have the writings of the Apostles as of co-ordinate authority with the Scriptures of the ancient prophets. Nothing then can be plainer than that the sacred writers claim to stand apart from human teaching, and upon their Divine Inspiration challenge our faith and obedience.

ALIQUIS. On this difficult subject I have found some relief in a theory like the following. All Christians believe that God has given a revelation to man, which consists in part of precepts to be obeyed, and in part of doctrines to be believed. All Protestants believe that that Revelation is contained in the Bible, to the exclusion of tradition, and while admitting that the Bible includes Christianity, it is consistent with this belief, to concede that as children learn religion and virtue from imperfect parents, and as subjects learn justice from laws imperfect in themselves, and administered by imperfect rulers, so it may have pleased Almighty God that the vehicle of His Revelation to man should not be absolutely pure and free from omissions and inaccuracies, which appears to be necessary to every thing else which is in any way mixed up with human agents. "There is no appearance in their writings that the

Evangelists or Apostles had any inward gift, or were subject to any power external to them, different from that of preaching or teaching which they daily exercised, and they no where lead us to suppose that they were free from error." The word of God is found in Scripture it is granted, but it does not follow that it is co-extensive with it.

NEMO. These, in the present day, are favourite views on the subject of Inspiration, but I hope you will find we must go further and higher. We have already learnt that the sacred writers affirm that they imparted statements of absolute truth, St. Paul distinctly averring, that what he communicated was taught him by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. That is very different from your account that the Apostles nowhere lead us to suppose that they were free from error. I agree with you that the Bible contains Christianity, or the Christian religion; but it contains more, as for instance, the ceremonial and political laws of the Jews, the boastings of Sennacherib, with prophecies and utterances of vain and unholy men. Revelation is a word of much wider signification than Christianity, or the Christian religion; it comprises the way of salvation, and other things beside, and although these other things are not necessary to salvation, yet Holy Scripture includes them. By the inspiration of the Scriptures I understand that their writers were called of God to their work, and that in the composition and arrangement of their writings, whether from an immediate Divine afflatus, or from pre-existing materials, they were under a special supernatural guidance, and thus enabled to communicate their messages without error, infirmity, or defect. There may be some things in them we are tempted to regard as trifling and superfluous, and therefore as unworthy of God, but our judgment in such matters is not a rectifying standard, since we cannot see the end from the beginning, nor grasp the full harmony and design of Divine communication. Even the so-called trivial and unimportant portions of Holy



Writ, may possess a marvellous significance, and be of high service, albeit at present we may fail to perceive this. The evidences of Divine Truth do not consist in the identifications of its teachings with the "inward intuitions," or "subjective perceptiveness," or "introspective judgments," or any perceptions and decisions of depraved human nature. We cannot permit the criminal to enact the laws by which he should be tried, nor place the culprit in the seat of the judge, and therefore we utterly dissent from the competency of fallen men, notwithstanding what the transcendental school may say to the contrary, to regulate the claims of Holy Scripture for our trust and guidance.

You will notice I speak of a human element, as well as of one Divine, in every part of the Bible. Inspiration does not supersede the intellect, nor habits of thought of the particular writers, but aids and controls them, and thus in their separate compositions their individual peculiarities of force, calmness, forms of expression, and style are preserved. Many things contained in Holy Scripture must have been imparted by the Holy Ghost, for they could not have been learnt except from His direct suggestion. In this case something like a mechanical use was made of the human agent, who was employed to reveal unknown truth to man. In other portions of Scripture the penmen delivered simply in their own language what had come to their knowledge, being left to express their messages according to the natural use of their faculties. Yet all the writers were kept from error by the presiding power of the Divine Spirit, and therefore the Bible possesses an indestructible accuracy and completeness. One part may be more important than another, yet every part is unquestionably true. "The whole collection of the books of the Old Testament comes to us with Divine credentials, prophecies in it fulfilled after they were uttered, Christ's attestation to them that they all testified of Him, St. Paul's testimony to them that they were

given by Inspiration of God, and having such Divine credentials, we cannot suppose that any of these books would mislead us, at least in things heavenly. If all this holds of the Old Testament, it holds, *a fortiori*, of the New, for, probably no one will contend that the Apostles, with Christ's own mission, with the gift of tongues and miraculous powers, with the special promise of the Comforter and of guidance by Him into all truth, with the assurance of Christ's own presence, and with the command to preach on the housetops what He had told them in the ear,—were in a worse position or more liable to error than the prophets of the Old Testament\*."

ALIQUIS. But would it not help us to admit as it has been suggested, that the writers were inspired but not the Book. We need not believe I think that the vase which contains the Divine essence is as Divine as the essence itself. It must be conceded, I judge, that the accuracy of the sacred writers on subjects of physical science, ethnology, history, and some other matters, are questionable.

NEMO. If you admit the Divine Spirit as the originator of any portion of the Bible, does it seem likely to you that that same Omniscient Spirit would be a party to ignorance and faultiness? Would He allow His own perfect truth to be mixed up with imperfections and errors? It appears to me that if we reject the smallest portion of the Bible as false and untrustworthy, we undermine the authority on which the rest is based. Is the Spirit of God a partner to the publication of a book which in some of its statements is false and misleading? Ponder that inquiry a little. It does not follow that every line of Holy Scripture is necessary to salvation, but it does follow, I deem, that every line inserted by Divine permission and guidance should be true to fact. Do not our Blessed Lord and His Apostles speak

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\* "Aids to Faith," p. 314.



of "Scripture," of "Holy Scripture," and do they not mean by such expressions the Old and the New Testaments? The Apostle Paul plainly declares that all, or every Scripture, is given by Inspiration of God. Your theory would set us to picking and choosing amidst the contents of the Holy Volume. But who shall distinguish between the human and the Divine in the Sacred Oracles, and draw a dividing line between section and section, and clause and clause? The web of inspired truth is perfect, and cannot be broken, and again admitting that every portion of Scripture may not be of equal importance, nevertheless, every portion comes to us, if not from the dictation, yet from the sanction of the Divine Spirit, and must be true. It will be time enough to abandon our faith in the plenary inspiration of Scripture when it is definitely ascertained that any of its statements are clearly contradictory, positively erroneous, and glaringly opposed to reason and fact. That discovery has not yet been made, albeit theorists have alleged the contrary. But let science define and settle its own conclusions before we lower Biblical Inspiration. Many of the difficulties and objections that used to be vauntingly plied against Holy Scripture, are now silenced by increased knowledge, and advancing illumination shall yet more fully verify the words of Locke; "That it has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Your distinction between the vase and the essence reminds me of Chillingworth's reply to a somewhat similar observation. "A merchant showing a ship of his own, may say, 'all my substance is in this ship,' and yet never intend to deny that his ship is part of his substance, nor yet to say that his ship is in itself."

ALIQUIS. If you will pardon me I do think there are some things in the Bible, so trifling and superfluous, as to be unworthy either of Divine dictation or Divine superintendency. And are there not statements which it is impossible to reconcile with

either fact or reason, statements conflicting and contradictory, even of the same transaction? I would instance the book of Ecclesiastes, why call a composition like that, abounding with sophisms and false conclusions, an Inspired production?

NEMO. Apparent discrepancies there are, which at first sight appear irreconcilable, but by patient investigation inaccuracy and contradiction become only apparent. Even if a fair critical discussion disprove the genuineness of any passage, this does not prove that the Bible is not inspired, but only that that particular passage is an interpolation. Such things are possible when you remember the multitudes of times Holy Scripture has been transcribed, not stereotyped by unerring metal, but written by human hands. Discrepancies and omissions are found in connection with other ancient books which have come down to us. It is probable that some texts in Holy Scripture have been lost or adulterated by transcribers, although we have reason to conclude that a divine protecting authority has accompanied its history. Remember, however, that all these difficulties and objections are well known to Christian apologists, to men of the profoundest and ripest scholarship, who, notwithstanding, hesitate not to accept with all their heart and soul, the Bible as a Divinely inspired and authoritative book. I may, I think, further say to you that the unchallengeable evidences in favour of the Divine Inspiration are too great to be set aside by anything less than obvious fact and demonstration. The first chapter of Genesis may yet prove to be in strictest fellowship with exact science, and be something more than poetry, or a blunder. Centuries ago the great Chrysostom wrote; "It may be said that in many places the evangelists are convicted of discordance. Nay, this very thing is a very great evidence of their truth. For if they had agreed in all things exactly even to time and place and the very words, none of our enemies would have believed but that they had met together,



and had written what they wrote by some human compact, because such entire agreement as this comes not of simplicity. But now even that discordance which seems to exist in little matters delivers them from all suspicion, and speaks clearly in behalf of the character of the writers. But if there be anything, touching times and places, which they have related differently, this nothing injures the truth of what they have said. And these things too, so far as God shall enable us, we will endeavour to point out; requiring you to observe that in the chief heads, those which constitute our life and build up our teaching, nowhere is any of them found to have disagreed; no not ever so little. But what are these points? That God became man, that He wrought miracles, that He was crucified, that He was buried, that He rose again, that He ascended, that He will judge, that He hath given commandments tending to salvation, that He hath brought in a law not contrary to the Old Testament, that He is a Son, that He is the Only-begotten, that He is a true Son, that He is of the same substance with the Father, and as many things as are like these; for touching these we shall find that there is in them a full agreement.\*"

This is an important testimony, and shows us with what breadth of view, and intelligent honesty, the earliest Christian authorities vindicated their faith. To the present hour no attempt to convict the Scriptures of substantial error has succeeded, and whatever differences, or discrepancies, obtain among the sacred writers in the details of their narrative, they affect not, in the remotest degree, a single fact, doctrine, or truth of Revelation. You have instanced the Book of Ecclesiastes as unworthy of a place in the Canon of Inspiration, but by its position there it is not said that what Solomon uttered is true, but it is true that Solomon followed such a line of conduct, and then uttered these things. It is given to us as a true history, the history

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\* Chrysostom's "Homilies on St. Matthew," Oxford Translation, p. 4.

of a mind in its wanderings from God. "It is true that this royal man, after leaving the raised platform of his early piety, threw aside his manhood, and sunk down to the lowest point of sensual existence. It is true, that in his search after happiness, he comes before us as the most fitful and the most unsatisfied of mortals. Now he is the man of science, and then the man of pleasure; now a believer in fate, then the advocate of materialism; now the sceptic, then the debauchee; now the epicurean, then the stoic. The book has a place in the Bible not by chance, but by Divine arrangement, and its light burns as a beacon in the midst of rocks and shoals on which thousands have struck and been wrecked for ever. On the same principle do we account for the introduction of several other histories and statements in God's Word."

ALIQUIS. Since no limit can be assigned to the powers of Omnipotence, where no contradiction is implied, I cannot see the impossibility of inspiration, that is, as I understand it, a supernatural conveyance of Divine truth to the human mind. I can see nothing unreasonable in your theory of Divine suggestion, and of Divine superintendency, for the essence and authority of Revelation are secured without admitting that every word therein is a direct utterance of the Holy Spirit. In the transmission of truth from the Divine mind, through prophet or apostle, to others, we shall not find a fuller definition of Inspiration than that given us by the Apostle Peter: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved (borne along) by the Holy Ghost." This view of the subject aids another conclusion I have reached and wish to preserve, that in a real sense the Biblical writers possessed an Inspiration which has not been enjoyed by any one since their days. The vision is closed, the testimony is sealed, and revelations from heaven for preservation in books have ceased. From the words of the Bible nothing must be taken away, and to it nothing must be added. But one of the com-



mon notions of our day is that inspiration is not unique or specific, but is a natural and necessary part of the human economy. God's Word is treated as if superannuated and outstripped, and the religion of human nature is placed above that of the New Testament, and arrayed against it. "Moses, Elijah, Paul, and John, putting aside for a moment external miracles, which are not necessarily connected with inspiration, became prophets and apostles through obedience to the same voice that sounds in our consciences and in our hearts." So that on this theory we are all more or less inspired, the dictum being, "the man whose moral and spiritual nature rises above his times is an inspired man.\*" Another of this school tells us: "Inspiration, like God's omnipresence, is not limited to the few writers claimed by the Jews, Christians, or Mahometans, but is co-extensive with the race; as God fills all space, so all spirit; as He influences and constrains unconscious and necessitated matter, so He inspires free and conscious man." It is evident, then, that if such notions be adopted, the ground on which the Church has rested all its hopes is gone, and I am driven to the conclusion that the inspiration of the writers of Holy Scripture differs not only in degree, but in kind, from all other so-called inspirations. I know it is contended, that the inspiration was not such as to give that character of infallibility to all the statements and teachings of the Scriptures which has generally been believed in; but merely an influence, giving a certain degree of elevation to the mind of the writer, while it left him still liable to error, and in many respects weak as other men.

NEMO. I am thankful you have reached the above conclusion. I speak it thoughtfully, we have but one solitary Inspired Book, whose writers were under special and exclusive Divine influence and direction. Coleridge writes: "Thucydides, Tacitus, and Machia-

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\* "New Theories and the Old Faith," by Rev. J. A. Picton.

vel, Bacon, Harrington, are red-letter names even in the almanacks of worldly wisdom ; and yet I dare challenge all the critical benches of infidelity to point out any important truth, any one efficient practical direction or warning, which did not pre-exist, and for the most part in a sounder, more intelligent, and more comprehensive form in the Bible." Even on this issue we would rest this question of the ineffable and exclusive Inspiration of God's Word. Whatever may be the elevation of a man's mind above prevailing opinions, his spontaneous flashes of spiritual light, his inward and lofty sympathy with human existence in its nature and developments ; what is all this in the most finished human compositions in comparison with the depth, and breadth, and grandeur of Biblical revelations ? How many precious and sublime truths are there in the Scriptures of which we find not a trace in the most applauded productions of men ? If the writings of all nations were during the next hour to be consigned to oblivion, the loss would be as nothing compared with the perishing of the Bible. Nor would the literature of the world ever have reached its present standard, but for the previous existence and the Divine influence of Revelation upon the mind of man ; for the Bible owes nothing at all to the literature of the world, but aids it everywhere.

ALIIQUIS. Considering the vain illusions of weak judgment and heated imagination, should not certain criteria be agreed upon by which an inspired person may know assuredly that he is inspired, and be able to communicate proofs to others of his inspiration ?

NEMO. It has been asserted by the adversaries of Revelation that the flights of a distempered zeal are accepted by Christian believers for holy raptures of inspiration. On the contrary, however, it is quite possible to distinguish between enthusiasm and illusions, and Divine Inspiration, and that by indubitable credentials. Suppose, for instance, a man of ordinary ability,



and of probity and virtue, to feel his mind on a sudden opened, his understanding illumined, and his ideas enlarged; would he not conclude such an effect to be somehow supernatural? If he perceived within himself a knowledge of facts which perhaps he had never thought upon, or if thought upon, found them inexplicable,—if such facts stood out before him with perfect clearness, as by a kind of intuitive knowledge,—what would such sudden acquisition of information be but miraculous? If to this enlargement of intellectual possessions there be added likewise the evidence of senses, and a power of working miracles; would not this individual be conscious of a Divine infusion of light and energy, and attribute his wisdom and discernment, not to himself, not to human teachers, not to the operations of nature, but to an extraordinary Divine interposition? When he found himself able to perform things beyond the ordinary results of creation, when disease and sickness fled at his touch, when he said to the lame, walk, and he walked; and to the blind, receive thy sight, and he received it; the person so endowed would clearly know that he was not the subject of a vain illusion, but of a supernatural investiture. The internal miracle of illumination and power over words, would be corroborated by external prodigies or miracles, demonstrating that he was the receiver of a Divine afflatus and endowment. All this would be certifying to himself and to others, the truth and reality of the communication to him of supernatural powers. Especially remembering here two things, that the extraordinary gifts of inspiration were not conferred for the man's own private advantage or honour, but for the general good and benefit of others; and then that these gifts were bestowed for the confirmation and enforcement of the purest and fullest scheme of human virtue and happiness that can be conceived. You may gain some idea of the divinity of miracles, secret or visible, by weighing the end they are intended to serve. To suppose a person himself

inspired for selfish and sinister designs ; or incapable on the other hand of proving the divinity of his commission to others who are not inspired, is a supposition of unrealness sufficient to confute itself. So that the inspired writers of the books of the Old and New Testaments supported and enforced their Divine and official Inspiration by extraordinary signs and many supernatural works. They were calm, unpretentious, unselfish, unambitious ; and assuredly knew their powers were from God, leaving others who disbelieved their celestial commission without excuse, by their unparalleled accomplishments. In this way, then, we may prove that Inspiration in man is not false and vain ; the inspired person may know himself when he is inspired, and be able to evince this knowledge and proof to others who are uninspired. Whosoever considers the perfect influence which He who formed the soul must have over it, must believe that He can afford clear and strong conviction of any truths He shall be pleased extraordinarily to communicate, and can accompany these intelligent convictions of his own revelations, with such outward demonstrations as to certify to all their Divine source.

ALIIQUIS. Miracles do not appear to me to be very cogent evidences of the truth of Christianity. They are rather objects of faith themselves, requiring much of it, and creating collisions between the religious belief and the scientific conclusions of mankind. I would maintain that we are to believe the miracles for the sake of the revelations in the Bible, rather than the revelations for the sake of the miracles. Remembering how we have been imposed upon, and how easily we are deceived, can we be too suspicious of miracles, and especially since the testimony of universal man is that all things go in a natural order and according to fixed laws, from which there is no deviation.

NEMO. It is true that the Gospel miracles are objects of faith, but in a sense which is by no means incompatible with their being also evidences. Testimony of all



kinds is an appeal to faith as distinguished from sight ; in this historical sense miracles are objects of faith, but not exempt from criticism. It is not so much the truth of the doctrine as the authority of the teacher, that miracles are employed to prove ; and the authority of the teacher being established, the truth of his communications follows. It is probably impossible to think of any mode in which men could be sure that revelations really were from God, except by arming the men who promulgated them with miraculous powers, such as no one without God's sanction or help could exercise. That God should communicate with His creatures upon the earth appears for many reasons necessary, and that the mission of his messengers should be attested by miracles seems also reasonable and likely. If we admit the fact of Inspiration at all then the basis of Christianity is essentially miraculous, for Inspiration is a miracle on the mind, and miracles on matter appear as possible and feasible.

We have three reasons I judge for believing in the reality of Scripture miracles, meaning by miracles suspensions, or counteractions of the laws of nature, or occurrences beyond its powers and results. First: He who constituted the order of nature can reverse it at His pleasure. I have never seen Paley's observation refuted or shaken ; "once believe that there is a God, and miracles are not incredible." To say that there can be no miracles because all things go on according to fixed laws is simply begging the question. Miracles appear to my own mind the necessary and rational accompaniments of Inspiration. In many ways the origin of the miraculous element in the Gospel history has been challenged and attempted to be accounted for. Rationalism has been suggested and urged, by such writers as Paulus ; naturalism or unapprehended fulfillments of general laws, by Schleiermacher and his school ; the development theory has been pressed by Baur ; and the mythic scheme by Strauss and others. But the

ablest and most learned men of successive ages have rejected their theories. Second: miraculous agency is essential to a verification of communications from God to man. Whatever testimony there is on behalf of a Revelation from God, it is in effect a testimony to miracles. Certainly there is no law in the human mind which forbids belief in the marvelous, or in phenomena contrary to experience. Who can say, admitting the rule and sovereignty of an infinite Personal God, that nothing can occur contrary to man's experience? Surely finite experience is not to be the test and standard of all appearances and possibilities. So that we only require humility, and the bare rudiments of religious truth, even faith in a Personal Deity, to believe in miracles. How these considerations are strengthened when you remember, that "marvels," "mighty works," and "signs," were wrought for the enforcement upon the minds of men, of the sublimest, most gracious, and momentous truths. It is no prostitution of the outward to make it bend and serve the invisible and intelligent in man; it is in no way unworthy of Divinity to use the physical and unconscious elements of matter for the accomplishment of spiritual and eternal good. When Elijah had restored the widow's son to life, she said; "Now by this I know thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." So our blessed Lord appeals to His miracles as proofs of His mission from the Father; "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." When Nicodemus saw Christ he called Him Rabbi, and assigning as his reason, said; "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." "It appears, then, that the Scripture miracles stand on a solid basis, which no reasoning can overthrow. Their possibility cannot be denied without denying the very nature of God as an all-powerful Being; their proba-



bility cannot be questioned without questioning His moral perfections; and their certainty as matters of fact, can only be invalidated by destroying the very foundations of all human testimony." Third: not only do the miracles in Scripture serve as heralds and credentials to those to whom revelations were made, and whose office it was to communicate these revelations to others, but they are recorded in the Book of Inspired Truth as facts. If you deny the reality of these miracles, you must deny the other recorded events in Holy Scripture. If you admit the Existence of the Majestic Personality of Him whom the Gospels record, you must admit that He turned water into wine, fed thousands with a handful of bread, trod the ocean wave, and raised the dead. If you believe in the characters and words of the Apostles, you must likewise credit their miracles. The facts and the doctrines are so closely connected in the Sacred narratives, that the man must accept the New Testament in an unaccountable manner, who receives the doctrines while rejecting the facts, and deals with one portion of Scripture apart from the other. Innumerable miracles were wrought by our Lord in the presence of hundreds of persons, and they are recorded by those who saw Him perform them, who have proved themselves to be trustworthy by their friendship with Jesus, by Divine aid being promised them, by their unsurpassed recitals of truth, by the holiness and usefulness of their lives, and by their cheerful submission to sufferings, and even cruel death, for the sake of Him whom they loved so well, and of His cause which they served so faithfully.

ALIIQUIS. I acquiesce in your theory of Inspiration, the theory of Divine dictation and of Divine guidance; and yet how shall we appear if palpable errors are after all detected in Scripture? I fear the discovery would awkwardly modify our theory. Would it not be better to imitate our fathers in Christian divinity, for in the Jewish and earliest Christian ages no definite theory of

inspiration was ever propounded? The technical use of this word, as implying supernatural dictation, first appears in the Helvetic Confession of 1675. And as you know there is no article in the English Church on the subject of Inspiration, and that this word occurs only once in the Prayer Book, namely, in the Collect which precedes the Communion Service, there denoting Divine influence on the hearts of believers. "It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the framers of the articles and formularies of the Church intended to leave a freedom of judgment, on a point on which the greatest of the Continental Reformers, and even of Romish Scholars, were divided."

NEMO. A lamentable use has been made of some of these facts, and the freedom supposed to be thus conceded has been too fully used. I should say, the language of the sixth Article is sufficiently clear for guidance on the question of Inspiration. "Holy Scripture," this Article reads, "containeth all things necessary to salvation," and "Holy Scripture" here is synonymous with the "Word of God," and is equivalent to Divine Scripture, or Inspired Scripture. Whatsoever is "God's Word" is "Holy Scripture;" whatsoever is "Holy Scripture" is "God's Word." Divine Scriptures are God's Scriptures, that is, written by God. And thus I cannot but think, as explained by the highest Church authorities, the intention of the sixth Article in distinguishing between canonical and apocryphal books, is to teach us that "Holy Scripture" is the inspired and infallible "Word of God." Then as to your point what may be the result, if error be proved to exist in the Old or New Testament, it is vain to surmise, but this we must remember, that up to the present time all attempts to convict the Bible of erroneous teaching have failed. Our deepening conviction is that its superhuman character will be increasingly confirmed. From whatever quarter truth bursts upon Christian believers, they may hail its approach, and greet it as a



friend. Let inquiry go forth, let light spread, let the heavens blaze down their illuminations, and the earth disclose its deepest veins ; let men of leisure and intellect penetrate and systematize the phenomena of creation until the last secret is revealed, and science announces the perfection of its conquests ; in the meridian fulness of knowledge, the Bible will not only live, but pass into higher life and strength. It has survived, and will ever survive, human criticism and discovery, for there is in it and with it a vitality and infinitude of meaning which nothing can destroy. Like Milton's angel—

" Vital is every part,  
It cannot, but by annihilation, die."

It is true the Holy Volume presents no theory of Inspiration. It teaches us nothing of partial, occasional, or dubious inspiration, and is silent on distinctions between that of elevation and of suggestion, and on the subtleties of a mechanical or dynamical theory. It does not exhibit any scheme, but declares the fact of Inspiration ; it does not describe the process, but announces results. The sacred writers, with great plainness and frequency, assert the truth of Divine Inspiration, although they are silent on the *mode* of inspiration. "All Scripture," is the asseveration of St. Paul, "is given by inspiration of God," that is, not all Scripture as if the whole were taken collectively, but as the original text teaches us, every Scripture, every book of Scripture, every passage, for as St. Peter affirms, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Nothing can be more authoritative than these affirmations, and instead of incompetent men eking out for themselves portions of Holy Writ which they deem inspired, it is wiser and more modest to accept the Bible's own account of its origin and authority. The Scriptures profess to stand apart from, and to be superior to, all other writings, and ask by unique and imperial designations to be recognised. The inspiration of the sacred writers is totally different from

lary, mental associations, range of knowledge, and general dispositions, remained and moved with conscious freedom, under the eye of the presiding Agent.

I venture again to define what I mean by the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, namely, that the several writers of them had imparted to them such a degree of Divine assistance, influence, or guidance, as enabled them to communicate religious knowledge to others, without error or mistake, whether the subjects of such communications were things beyond the discovery of human reason immediately revealed to them, or things with which they were before acquainted. This Inspiration is distinguishable from genius, or mere human mental elevation, in such particulars as the following. Genius is a natural gift, Inspiration a supernatural one; genius is given for general purposes, Inspiration for restricted and extraordinary ones; genius pervades the whole of life, Inspiration is confined to only portions of it; genius would have existed had there been no Inspiration, Inspiration likewise may exist where there is no genius; of human reason genius is the handmaid, Inspiration anticipates it; the thinkings and teachings of men of genius may contradict each other, inspired men think and teach alike; genius is an uncertain and untrustworthy guide, Inspiration an infallible one; finally, Inspiration built up the fabric of revealed truth, genius, alas! has too frequently been employed in attempts to pull it down.

You now very properly ask, what evidence exists, corroborative of the supernatural state of mind, in the conscious possession of which the holy penmen claim to have written their books. The writer who professes to bring more than human knowledge to us must be prepared to produce more than human credentials. And by external and miraculous credentials the Biblical writers sustained their claims to a Celestial Inspiration. The books themselves contain internal evidence of a superhuman agency. Then there is the evidence of



fulfilled prophecy, being at once doctrine and miracle, and proving its heavenly origin by carrying in itself the certitude of its Inspiration. There is likewise the moral evidence, or that which arises from the superior excellence of Scriptural truth, as compared with other systems. There is further the experimental and practical evidence of Christianity, and its progress in the world under circumstances unfavourable to its triumphs. And above all there is the identification of Scripture with the absolute certainty of the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I suggest the careful consideration of these evidences as corroborative of the Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture.

I. Let us begin with the last mentioned, the reality of Christ's earthly life and death. Let these commanding miraculous events of history be established, and the rest of the supernatural facts of the sacred narratives, with the plenary inspiration of their writers, will likewise be established. During the period when Palestine was a part of the Roman empire, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by wonders and miracles and signs," lived and died. All history verifies the reality of the earthly life of this Wondrous One. You will encounter immovable difficulties in any attempt to disprove this stupendous fact. And never before, and never since, stood there up before men such a character as Jesus of Nazareth. We can discover no defect in it, and imagine nothing beyond. It is a living, practical Originality, of which the model nowhere existed, and for which absolute perfection is claimed. Notwithstanding the attacks of sceptics, the moral character of Jesus of Nazareth stands out in centuries of time to which He has given a designation, and before the nations of the earth which He has elevated, as unapproachable, sublime, peerless. I cannot here resist reading you a striking passage from a recent publication on the many-sidedness of the Personality of Christ, as depicted in the Gospels. "So far has the many-

sidedness and richness of His character transcended the thoughtful analysis of the closest observers, that scarcely any man, or section of men, has been able to appreciate more than one of its purely human aspects. The knights of old saw in Him the mirror of all chivalry; the monks, the pattern of all asceticism; the philosophers, the enlightener in all truth. To a Fenelon He has seemed the most rapt of mystics; to a Vincent de Paul, the most practical of philanthropists; to an English poet,

"The best of men  
That ere wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

A sceptical historian, accidentally taking up the New Testament, suddenly finds in Christ the explanation of all history; a fiery demagogue tells a nation, crushed by long oppression, that he was a child of the people, "*le bon sansculotte*"; a victorious Emperor, the last great man of secular history, contrasting his own utter evanescence with Christ's eternal rule, declares that he understands and recognises men, and that Jesus Christ was not a man; a prophet of anarchy and naturalism, in the mid-confession of his faith, suddenly bursts into eloquent admiration, and "with a hand as firm as that of a martyr," writes that "if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.\*" Here I might ask you to think of the unlettered and unimaginative followers of Christ creating such a character, and palming it upon the world! I must continue to insist, that the difficulties of unbelief are far more formidable than any difficulties of faith in Christ's Divine character, and the super-human features of Holy Scripture.

It is easy to discover in the current literature of the day, that many suppose credence in Christianity, and general ignorance, to be allied. There is an assumption, that adepts in human wisdom are suspicious of the

\* "The Witness of History to Christ," by Rev. F. W. Farrar, M.A.



claims of the Gospel. This is not only an unjust reflection upon Christians, but a very remarkable expression of sentiment, or opinion. For, is it not true that some of the most gifted and erudite men have embraced Christianity, and have assigned reasons for their attachment? Men who have been versed in historic lore, and have had special qualifications for the scrutiny and criticisms of historical facts, such as Lardner, Arnold, and Merivale, have likewise been devout believers in our holy religion. It is true some historians have been sceptics, but if Christianity had had no foundation in truth, all sagacious students, all sound reasoners, would have been sceptics too. But how different is the fact. Christianity crumbles not to pieces, nor does the glorious figure of Jesus of Nazareth resolve itself into a myth, when touched with the wand of critical research.

ALIQUIS. I am one with you on the reality of Christ's earthly life. His existence is a great and solemn event in the history of the world, and one I firmly own which cannot be disproved. But is it not noteworthy that Christ's life and resurrection are described with many discrepancies? You will allow that discrepancies exist, and yet on so vital a point nothing seems more desirable than oneness of testimony.

NEMO. The life of Christ is the production of four distinct and independent minds, and as might be expected exhibits variations and apparent discrepancies. Yet, with magnificent fulness, that Life stands before us. I have already granted that errors may have crept into the process of transcription and translation, but whatever variations of detail, or omissions, you may notice, these do not change a single fact, nor affect the reality of Christ's transcendent Personality. The foundations of our faith are not in any way disturbed by the allegations of minute discrepancies and various readings. A careful examination of such apparent differences, especially with regard to the appearances of the Risen

Saviour, have led me rather to the belief, that as the narrative in this, and all essential points, was Divinely guided, so the variations you refer to are but the harmonious accounts of independent witnesses. "I have been used for many years," wrote Dr. Arnold, "to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort to the mind of a fair inquirer, than the great sign that God has given us, that Christ died and rose again from the dead." And Dr. Milman, another man accustomed to historical research and critical inquiries, has written; "The palmary miracle of all, the resurrection, stands entirely by itself; every attempt to resolve it into a natural event, a delusion or hallucination in the minds of the disciples, the eye-witnesses and death-defying witnesses to its truth, (I have read many such essays,) or with Spinoza, to treat it as an allegory or figure of speech, is to me a signal failure."

If we are able, then, heartily to subscribe to the reality of the Life and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which together constitute the August Miracle of the world, we shall obtain irrefragable evidence on the Divine Inspiration and authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

(a.) Jesus Christ bore a continual testimony to the truth of the ancient Scriptures, so much so that they have been termed "Christ's Bible." He quoted them a hundred and sixteen times, with an implied faith in their perfect truth. His injunction was, "Search the Scriptures," and this could only refer to the Old Testament writings, for the New Testament was not then written. He instanced and dilated upon, not merely common and civil occurrences of Old Testament history, but also miraculous events, such as the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the passage of the Red Sea, the manna of the desert, the miracles of the prophets, and



other supernatural interventions. He distinctly refers to the marvellous history of the prophet Jonah, and to the miracle of the fish; "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The predictions, precepts, annals, and marvels of Old Testament Scriptures, are interwoven with the Saviour's instructions, and appealed to as absolute verities.\* Allowing, then, His possession of a wisdom and of a virtue unapproachable by mortals, what is His testimony to the miraculous narratives of the ancient Scriptures, but declarations of their truth and authority? And yet you well know that in these days all the extraordinary events that have just been mentioned are, as facts, challenged and ridiculed. You have listened to unseemly jests about these Scriptural incidents, and banter and jokes have flowed from voluble despisers of Holy Scripture. Our Blessed Redeemer accepted the Pentateuch, and other books of the Old Testament, as of Divine authority and obligation; but scholarly and critical reasoners of our age have discovered that many of the events they record are unworthy of credence! In theory and brilliant description these reasoners will bow before the intellectual and moral greatness of Jesus of Nazareth, but they smile at His credulity, and reject as fables what He regarded as facts. This appears to me not merely attacking the historical records of the Bible, but Christ's character, by arraigning His knowledge and judgment at the bar of human reason. Men reject what He believed; that is, they assume to be wiser than He was. It is noteworthy that some of the most exquisite delineations of the nobility and beauty of the unapproachable excellence of Christ's character have been given us by sceptical writers. They plainly aver that the greatest minds have seen no further, and added nothing to His religion; that

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\* See "The Continuity of Scripture," by William Page Lord Hatherley.

transcendent opulence and grandeur of soul were His ; that he dealt as a master with matters which the greatest of men thought it their highest office only distantly to approach ; that in Him holiness, rectitude, love, mercy, reconciliation, and sacrifice were all embodied in an historical and concrete reality. These are the confessions not only of Christians, but of unbelievers, wrung from them by the inexorable force of facts. Whatever else is doubtful, the peerless character of Christ is beyond dispute. The facts of His holy and beneficent life are admitted, the facts of His super-human wisdom and humility, the facts which proved that powers above nature were at His command, and that He moved on sea and land a Visible Divinity. After these admissions it does seem strange, that the books He venerated, and the events He spoke of as true, should be challenged and derided by men, who, it must be added, in too many instances, manifest a sort of pleasure in proclaiming their objections, and in unsettling the minds of others.

(b.) Touching the Inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures, I must again remind you, that on the eve of his departure Christ impressively asserted, that the Spirit which was after His death to convince the world, the Spirit whose fuller presence with His disciples and Church made it "expedient" that He should go away, was to abide with them as "the Spirit of Truth." Said the Redeemer ; "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Emphatic and unmistakable from first to last is the appeal in Scripture to truth, so much so, that it may itself appropriate our Lord's declaration ; "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Of the eight writers of the New Testament, five—Matthew, John, Peter, James, and Jude—were among the Apostles to whom our Lord gave authority to publish His Gospel to the world, and to perform miracles in confirmation of their teachings.



Paul, another of the eight, was subsequently called to the apostolic office; he was acknowledged by the rest of the Apostles, and vindicated his claim to that high office by miracles and services of the most demonstrative character. Of the remaining two, Mark was the companion and fellow labourer of the apostle Peter, and was so highly esteemed by him that he calls him "Marcus my son"; while Luke was the colleague and steadfast companion of the apostle Paul in all his sufferings, labours, and journeys for many years. In his epistle to Timothy he quotes from the Gospel of Luke x. 7, and also from the law, Deut. xxv. 4, and, classing both quotations together, introduces them as the teaching of "the Scripture." It has been said that the New Testament writers do not claim inspiration for themselves, but how untenable is such an assertion. They affirmed that they possessed "the mind of Christ," and that it was "not they who spake, but the Spirit of their Father which spake in them." "The Spirit speaking expressly" is a phrase plainly denoting their Inspiration. The New Testament Scriptures are styled "revelations made unto holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit," gifts and communications promised to them, as we have seen, by Christ on the eve of His departure from earth. The purity and truthfulness, then, of the Redeemer's character guarantee to us the full Inspiration of the Christian and Jewish Scriptures.

ALIQUIS. The originality and augustness of Christ's character do place the fact of the Inspiration and authority of the Bible in a prominent position. Still it has appeared to me that the apparent failures and defeats of Christianity are inconsistent with the full admission of its divinity. And with a Divine religion in our midst, how can we account for the imperfect Christian condition of modern civilization? Although so much has been said for the early and rapid progress of Christianity, I think it could be shown that the era of its introduction was a tame and uncritical one, and

that it was first addressed to the lowest and least intelligent classes of society.

II. NEMO. It may be that some Christian historians have exaggerated the success of the Gospel, and the numbers and sufferings of the Martyrs in the first centuries. Yet on all hands it is admitted that the victories of Christianity over Judaism, Paganism, and Polytheism in the earliest Christian ages, were great and marvellous, as certified to us by heathen writers, and the soberest ecclesiastical historians. In a few months after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, multitudes of Jews and Samaritans were induced publicly to profess their belief that He was the prophet like unto Moses, the deliverer promised to Israel, the Son of God, and the Saviour. With singular patience and equanimity these converts to Christianity endured the contempt or the hatred, the pity or the vengeance, of their friends and countrymen. In a few years many thousands of pagans, in the cities of Asia Minor, Rome, Greece, and Macedonia, were won to the same faith, and ere a century had elapsed, ere the generation had passed away that had seen Christ scourged in the hall of Pilate, and expire amidst agony and shame, the Gospel had spread to such an extent throughout the Roman Empire, that the temples of heathenism were almost deserted. Notwithstanding the tortures and death which everywhere threatened the Christians, they continued rapidly to increase in numbers, until their humble and humanly unaided religion triumphed over the idolatry and philosophy of the age. Before the close of the second century Christianity was more widely disseminated than any one religion had ever been, true or false. You say that the Gospel triumphed over the ignorant and uninquiring, but you must bear in mind that the Apostles and earliest apologists of the Christian faith had to encounter the inquiries of learned and subtle men. Many of the converts were high-born men and women, well-trained reasoners and thinkers, a fact certified to us by the



direct statements of the Apostles themselves, the evidence of existing monuments of antiquity, by inferences of no little strength from the records of secular history, and from the language and sentiments of contemporary heathens. The Gospel has been well proved from the beginning, and the men to whom it was first preached could not but know, whether the principal facts were faithfully reported. The people in Judea, in Samaria, in Asia Minor, in Greece, and in Rome, were competent judges of events occurring in those regions. As far as we know, philosophy has never abolished idolatry in a single village, but the unadorned discourses of unscholastic Christian teachers prevailed over the prejudices of the synagogue, the learning and pride of the academy, the swords of legions, and the malice of a powerful heathen priesthood, numbering their adherents by millions.

On what grounds did the early Christian evangelists and writers secure the belief of their statements? Addressing themselves to the intelligence and moral sensibilities of their hearers, among whom were all classes of society, how did they obtain the authority they exercised? Every effect must have an adequate cause, and I ask you to account for the early success of Christianity. You will agree with me, I venture to assume, that the evidence of Divinity—arising from the success of a system—depends, not on the mere fact of its success, but on the circumstances amid which it triumphs. The testimony which gained for Christianity an entrance into the Roman Empire at all in such an age, and among such a people, proves that it was testimony that could not be gainsayed nor evaded, and this witness abides to the present day in invincible strength. The reality of the life of Jesus, the country and age in which He lived, His miraculous and beneficent works, His station and His death, were facts which could not be disproved, or they would have been. Then mark the character of this new faith, so obnoxious both to the Jews and to the

Gentiles. Its first great article, the doctrine of the Cross, its humiliating assertions of the sinfulness of the whole human race, its imperative admonitions to repentance, its stern rejection of all human righteousness as a ground of acceptance before God, its offers of free and full salvation to the most depraved, as well as to the most virtuous—to the slave, as well as to his master—its inculcation of temperance, humility, charity, self-denial, its announcement of the resurrection of the body, and of the life everlasting; all this proved it to be perfectly unlike every existing system, and exposed it to the indignation of haughty philosophers, and the execrations of profligate people. It was a religion at variance with the current maxims of worldly policy, giving countenance to the poor, and consideration to the lowly, this too at a time when wealth was adored, ambition esteemed magnanimity, and pleasure courted as the supreme good. The old religion of the Roman Empire was associated with whatever was venerable, sacred, or renowned, in the annals and sentiments of the people. The poets and orators of the Augustine age had won immortal fame, and the Cæsars had subdued every nation from the streams of the Rhine and Danube to the deserts of Arabia and Africa, and had turned the town on the banks of the Tiber into the capital of the world. Despite the array of prejudice, and pride, and learning, and power; despite the force of custom, the pleasures of sin, the impetuosity of passion, and inveiglements of vice; the champions of the Gospel without human learning, and in the absence of all man's favourite and accustomed instrumentality, spread their cause with incredible rapidity over the face of the habitable world. Justyn Martyr, who wrote about the year 150, has recorded; "There is not a nation, Greek or Barbarian, or of any other name, even of those who wander in tribes, and live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator of the universe, in the name of the crucified Jesus." In



spite of tortures, in defiance of terrors, amidst ten thousand obstacles, apparently insuperable, the heralds of the Gospel perseveringly told their artless tale. If they enjoyed peace, their holy cause prospered; if they suffered persecution, it still prospered. If sovereigns countenanced them, the world came to it, because Christians lived worthily and righteously; if sovereigns were incensed against them, the multitude still came, because Christians suffered meekly, and died triumphantly. The early success of Christianity, notwithstanding appalling and prolonged persecutions, evidences an extraordinary interposition of God in its favour, proving its truth and authority by its being protected and forwarded by Divine Omnipotence. Admit the introduction of this agency and we have an easy and rational explanation of the facts we have been recounting, but reject this Divine intervention and these facts become inexplicable.

ALIQUIS. What is your judgment of such a book as Renan's "Life of Jesus"? He says of Jesus Christ, "He was not sinless," and again, "in the same way that many of his great qualities are lost to us, through the fault of His disciples, it is also probable that many of His faults have been concealed." Are not his statements calculated to injure the character of Jesus, and sober down the early extraordinary success of the Gospel? Has not Gibbon, also, indicated how Christianity may have originated in human invention, and have become popular by mere human agency? Then the success of Mahometanism, is frequently alleged as the counterpart of the practical triumph of the Christian religion.

NEMO. I am glad you have asked my attention to these particulars. I can assure you Christianity has nothing to fear from the most rigorous examination, or the most candid confessions. Renan's book abounds with brilliant colourings, with many assumptions, and with not a few palpable perversions; but it does not weaken the truths on which our faith in Christianity is based. I regard it as quite a harmless production, if

read, but with an average amount of knowledge, on the nature and history of the Gospel, and the same I would say of his later book on "The Apostles." By his admission of the reality of Christ's life and works, he witnesses, after all, to His supernatural character. Let the fact of Christ's life be disproved, let the Incarnation and sublime morality of Jesus Christ be set aside, and our belief in Christianity would then be undermined and lost. It was the certainty and the strength of these truths that won for it its triumphs in the Roman Empire; and here is the ground of our assurance it will one day conquer the world. All the points of difficulty and doubt instanced by Ernest Renan were examined by the critical and antagonistic men of the early centuries of the Christian era, since the infidel makes no real progress, but returns from age to age upon his own footsteps. "Voltaire's theory of imposture is supplanted by Strauss's theory of the myth; and lo! in thirty years Strauss's theory of the myth is replaced by Renan's theory of imposture." Gibbon has laboured to account for the early success of Christianity, and brought to his task accomplished scholarship, profound knowledge, a majestic diction, and great depth and discrimination of thought. It is because such able, astute, and persevering intellects as his have failed to disprove the truth of the Gospel, that we are led the more firmly to believe in its superhuman origin and authority. It proves itself to be no imposture by shining forth with new evidence in every light in which it can be placed. The causes which Gibbon assigns for the extraordinary success of the Gospel are—"The intolerant zeal of the Christians; the doctrine of a future life which Christianity promulgated; the miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive Church; the pure and austere morals of the Christians; the unity and discipline of the primitive Church; and the scepticism which generally prevailed on the popular religions." Unquestionably, some of these were secondary causes;



but in the sense the historian attaches to them, they miserably fail to account for the diffusion of a system which was everywhere tested and opposed, and yet well-nigh everywhere victorious. No person will be perplexed with Gibbon's representations who waits to discern between plausible and correct reasoning, who compares his representations of the state of polytheism, of the character and habits of the Christians, and of their sufferings and martyrdoms, with the authentic records of those times. It may, I know, be said that it is an unwarrantable conclusion to fix upon this one of Divine intervention, when many other suppositions may be advanced, and while a hundred different causes which are unknown to us may have produced the effects in question; it would be, they state, more rational to ascribe them to untaught genius, to fanaticism, to the uncontrollableness of human passions and conduct, than to so incomprehensible an agency. Such notions as these proceed on the assumption that we are ignorant of the circumstances under which the Gospel was first proclaimed. But the truth is, we are fully and minutely acquainted with these circumstances, and such a book in our midst as Merivale's "Conversion of the Roman Empire," and others, make our ignorance of these times inexcusable. Besides these observations altogether overlook that sound maxim, that every effect must have an adequate cause. Genius, superstition, and the waywardness of human passions and conduct have never produced effects which have any resemblance to the facts of the early success of Christianity, nor are such things sufficient to produce such effects. Then, further, the truth of these facts may be admitted, but instead of tracing them to the only cause adequate to their production, the unbeliever abides satisfied with expatiating on their marvellous and inexplicable character. These truths are relegated to the region of the mysterious and unaccountable, and there, with an assumed modesty and candour, left.

But all this kind of objection and sentiment exhibits the utter absurdity of ascribing the Christian religion to unknown or human causes. Nothing short of a Divine element and power can afford a rational explanation of the origin and success of the Gospel. As for the success of Mahometanism being its counterpart, it might be shown that no two systems could differ more entirely in their character and growth, than did Mahometanism and Christianity. Instead of points of comparison between them, you will discover hardly anything but points of contrast. In the use of such means as the Arabian employed, it is surprising that his success among a rude and uncivilised people was not more immediate and extensive; but considering the nature of the Christian religion, the character of its heralds, the simple and sublime agency employed, and the age marked as it was by curious speculation and philosophical research, not forgetting the resolute opposition it encountered, we may confidently affirm that its triumphs were impossible without an invisible and Divine influence. A religion like the Christian (as Archbishop Sumner shows, in his admirable work on its "Evidences,") could never have existed unless it had been introduced by Divine authority; it could not have been invented, and without heavenly credentials it would not have been received. Its propagation, in the early ages, as well as through all succeeding time, is a distinct and unanswerable proof of its Divinity.

You spoke a short time ago of the failures or defeats of Christianity, of the present terrible pressure of evil, and of the unholy and sad character of modern civilization. On these matters I have something to acknowledge and deplore. But my strong conviction is that such a book on this subject as Lecky's "History of European Morals," which you probably have read, is too one-sided, and may be easily answered. The failures and defeats of the Gospel are only apparent, not real, and very limited and partial. One thing is



certain, that in no country or age has the Gospel suffered defeat, when justice has been done to her principles by her professed supporters. Indifferentism, worldliness, immorality, and unbelief in a community may prove her repression, but never her extinction; may cause her to halt and enfeeble her fires, but in no instance compass her destruction. And yet one triumph of deism, and apparent defeat of the Christian religion, must not be ignored. Not ages ago the French people, oppressed and insulted beyond endurance, galled by the fetters of superstition and slavery, maddened by a wasteful profligate court and vicious administration, threw themselves recklessly into the hands of infidelity, and it soon became their sovereign. In the frenzy of their newly acquired illumination and liberty, they rejected the Gospel, and with a daring consistency denied the being and attributes of their Creator. The temples of religion were closed, and the goddess of reason adored as the only divinity. All existing institutions were destroyed, all existing ties were broken. Man was made a law to himself, and the obligations which arise from social compact and Divine authority were cancelled. Virtue was stultified, and vice became monstrous. It was proclaimed in the streets, and written on the tombs, that death is an eternal sleep. In this silencing of Christianity, and this triumph of deism, the darkest atrocities, shameless, brutal lust, reckless suicides, and savage murders, rendered France one vast amphitheatre of blood and desolation. Surely the horrors of the French Revolution teach us that wherever the principles of infidelity are permitted to operate without restraint, they are subversive not only of faith and hope, but of every social good, of every holy, and every tender, and every generous affection. I may grant you then that in this way for a time our blessed religion suffered defeat, and infidelity obtained a victory. This condition of things we may expect everywhere if Christianity should wane and die. Nothing

appears to me more cruel than the endeavours of individuals to annihilate, or render inefficacious, the dearest blessings and hopes which ever visited the world,—blessings and hopes, the Divine bestowment of which is assured to us by evidences satisfactory to every unprejudiced and inquiring mind, but whose removal from the world is to these individuals a desire and a merriment. I might even venture to say to you, if you have found Christianity to be a cheat and the Bible a forgery, for compassion's sake, for the world's sake, keep the secret in your own breast, for, as Paley writes, "I desire that in judging of Christianity it may be remembered, that the question lies between this religion and none; for if the Christian religion be not credible, no one with whom we have to do will support the pretensions of any other." The present state of Christianity in this and other countries is far from what its friends wish it to be, yet it is a difficult thing to take a fair estimate of the amount of true religion around us or elsewhere. We are often faulty in our taste, and cloudy in our vision. The social immoralities and excesses of our day, however, are mournful, and some scenes in our professedly Gospel land can hardly be called Christian civilization. Great abominations are ill concealed, and religious indifference is glaring. The state of society which we now deplore cannot indicate that Christianity is effete, but rather that its professed believers and servants are worldly-minded and indolent. Spirituality in church communities I fear is feeble, and Christians of a weak and sentimental piety are easily discouraged and turned out of the way. There is also in these days too much professed Christianity without repentance. The assumption of a religious character by persons who have never offered up to God "the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit," is a root of many evils, and the source of weakness. The commanding and overpowering dence of the Divinity of the Gospel, arising from the



conscious possession of its sanctifying grace and power, is not we fear sufficiently insisted upon in our pulpits. Essays in too many places, not sermons, are preached; wordy and meagre addresses are delivered, instead of persistent personal appeals to the understandings and the hearts of men. And may not much be said for the absence in these days of the earnest enforcement of the sanctions of religion, and of the reality of "the wrath of God?" Our congregations are not made sufficiently to feel the frightfulness of transgression, and the terrible-ness of its consequences. Is there not a shunning to "declare the whole counsel of God," rather than, what the primitive teachers were distinguished for, its vehement and direct inculcation upon the consciences and lives of men? The state of modern society comes not of any enfeebled powers of Christianity, but from the Church's supineness, inconsistencies, want of faith, and the absence of earnest proclamations of duty and of destiny. Vigorous Christian teaching would in these days be owned of God for the correction and elevation of the people. Such teaching, likewise, would form a theological breakwater against surges which are seeking to sweep away the substance of Christianity, or dilute it into a merely moral system, without an atonement, without a Divine Saviour, and a sanctifying Spirit. In addition, too much cannot be said for the consistent lives of Christians themselves, since these have ever been the last and surest argument for Christianity. This completed the conversion of the Roman Empire; this completes, day by day, the conversion of the worldling and the sinner. It defies criticism; it transcends philosophy. This holy living, this every day Christianity, is emphatically the great need. Whatever may be the restlessness, infidelity, and extravagance of the human mind, men are not so much to be influenced by a philosophic theology or an orthodox creed, as by a living, practical godliness. Conscious that they seldom come into contact with spiritually living men, oppugners of

our faith are tempted to deny and scorn this highest form of life, and resolve pretensions to it into enthusiasm and hypocrisy. The vital energy of a deep-toned godliness is imperatively called for. What blessings the world would receive, and what glory would accrue to Jehovah and His church, were the Christian life fully manifested. The Saviour's exhortation is the homily for our times: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Buckle, in his book on the "History of Civilization," has said that the world is indebted to the intellectual, and not at all to the moral principle in man, for all the progress it has hitherto made. But this statement is contrary to fact. Where is there, or ever has been, civilization upon the earth, where there is not the Christian religion regulating the conscience and the life? There are, it will be allowed, however, signs of life and power in Christendom, auguries of good, and proofs of Gospel vitality. The kingdoms of the earth, no longer contending for local and trifling interests, are now dividing on the great questions of civil liberty, the rights of conscience, and the worth and claims of man. Men everywhere are becoming more conscious of their fellow men. Among ourselves Christians are forming into efficient societies for elevating the masses, and for the beneficent purpose of blessing the whole family of man. With much to deplore, we have much for which to be thankful, and what would our condition and civilization be without the restraining and inspiring influence of the Gospel of Christ?

ALIIQUIS. If the Bible be of Divine origin, it is but natural that the writings themselves should contain evidences of a superhuman agency. Their disclosures, their doctrines, and even their style and form, should be such as none but inspired men could have given. To say a book has been given us by God, what may we not expect?



NEMO. III. You will find it as the book of creation—uneven, majestic, simple, unfathomable, grave, glorious. There are features and aspects of the Bible which must be regarded as unparalleled, and which cannot be accounted for except on the assumption of its Divine Inspiration. Its peculiar lineaments indicate its celestial descent. Let us still remember that the writers of Holy Scripture were in the main, in a worldly sense, unlearned Jews. They were not reared in academic associations, but for the most part were plain men, in humble positions in society—herdsmen, tillers of the ground, and fishermen. Whence had these men the power to make their pages beam with incomparable beauty, with unapproachable wisdom and eloquence? Let me place before you a summary of their excellencies,—excellencies as original as they are important.

(a.) The comprehensive brevity of Holy Scripture is one of its marvels. Its aphoristic terseness, its condensed histories, its brief but pregnant doctrinal systems, are in marked contrast with the cumbrous mass of materials, which uninspired men have associated with it in the "Targums of the Jews," and "Sacred Traditions" of the Church of Rome. "How different the inimitable brevity of the sacred writers, who present their diversified compositions, embracing the interests of all time, and of both worlds, concentrated in a compass (as has been pithily remarked,) which a finger may suspend, and a wayfaring man may read. Without referring particularly to the Old Testament, except to remark that Moses has condensed the history of the world for seventeen hundred years into two short chapters,—where shall we find examples of brevity such as the New Testament presents? Never in the life of any other person did there occur such a vast assemblage of wonderful and memorable events as in the life of our Lord, the narration of any one of which might have been expanded into a volume; but a graphic description of *all* is presented by his most admiring followers in the brief space of a

few chapters. Who but they would have found it possible to avoid saying more than a few sentences of thirty years of such a life? or to have recorded so many miracles and acts of kindness; so many sublime sayings and personal characteristics; so many sufferings and persecutions; so many scenes of deep abasement and glorious majesty, without a reflection, a comment, or an exclamation? A single chapter suffices to record the marvels of the day of Pentecost, while but a single verse is devoted to the conversion of a Roman Pro-consul. It is not thus that men write biographies, or record marvels, or relate history. With all this brevity there is no confusion, but a transparent clearness, and inimitable variety."

(b.) The antiquity and vitality of the Bible are among its peculiar and suggestive features. The fact that it has subsisted, in its original entireness and integrity, for so many thousands of years, indicates its fellowship with an unchanging and undying Power. Everything around bears symptoms of vicissitude and decay, but the Bible has stamped upon it the attribute of immutability. In revolutions that effect and change everything else, in the extinction of races, in the absorption of states, the wreck of empires and dynasties, it survives in unimpaired strength, carrying with it the inward, elastic, and reproductive energy of an unearthly vitality. In this world of waste and death, the incorruptibility of the Bible must lead us to the recognition of a cause that is supernatural. It is the oldest, yet the freshest of our books.

(c.) Its power of self-adaptation, its adaptation to the progress of knowledge, science, and civilization, and to the varying necessities and spiritual phases of mankind, separate it from all other books, and predicate its Divine Inspiration. It is everywhere fruitful of the highest thoughts, inspiring the purest faith, and responding to the best instincts and cravings of humanity. It has been a shrine, and here kingdoms have



bowed, and multitudes of the high-minded and pure worshipped. The child with its opening sensibilities has bent here, and been captivated with its revelations of love and truth. To this shrine the mother has reverently come, and rivetted her offspring to its illuminations, its stores, its sweet promises, and beckoning heaven. Its praises have resounded in the halls of the noble, and echoed from the cottages of the poor. It has been the charm of the living, and the dying have embraced it on their couches, gazing on its visions their eyes have brightened, and with holy smiles they have passed from us, chanting its musical words of glorious life. The waters of salvation rise to the level of their fountain, and that fountain being settled in heaven, there can be no fear of its ever failing to rise to the greatest necessity of human nature, and thus no limits can be assigned to its adaptation to the needs and progress of society.

(d.) The inexhaustibleness of the Bible is another of what we venture to designate its Divine features. The tests by which men measure great things are fullness and freshness, and these are found in the Holy Volume. The more we read it the more it commends itself to us, our interest in it increasing with the frequency of its perusal. The richest gold mine may in time be worked out, and there be nothing left to reward labour, but the Bible is a mine which is inexhaustible. It has enriched our race in all ages past, and something new and fresh will be brought to light in all ages to come. Many human writings are worthy of study, and help us in life, yet in the best of them we soon discover they will not bear continued examination, somehow we tire of them, they lose their charm, they are in fact finite, and we lay them aside as no longer competent to absorb and reward research. The profoundest of them have a limit, and by an ordinary perseverance we measure their dimensions. This cannot be said of the Bible. We may read it so frequently that every phrase

is familiar, but new impressions are received from it, new lights emanate from it, and the interest instead of slackening increases. However repeatedly we traverse its fields, some other golden vein turns up its glance to us, and we marvel it had not been noticed before. The Bible is not of a size to alarm any one by his time ever so limited, and yet it is a size to engage all his hours by they ever so abundant and unoccupied. Multitudes of minds have for ages been poring over the sacred page, and myriads of sermons and treatises have sprung from it, but the man cannot be found who would affirm that there is no more to be learnt. Its life-long students have the conviction that it grows with their examination, and that they experience the repetition of the miracle whereby the scantiest provisions were dilated into a sufficiency for thousands, and then there remained over and above, enough to fill many baskets. What is this but evidence of the Divine Original and Fulness of the Bible? What is this but Divinity in its pages, making it like a fire for ever burning, and yet for ever unconsumed?

(*e.*) The Bible's exquisite and universal fitness for the human heart, the profound accordance between the disease of our moral nature, and what it offers as a remedy, is another corroboration of its Divine Inspiration. Its sincere believer finds it instinct with life, coming to his consciousness, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." This subjective evidence of its truth appeals to the human consciousness, blending with it, raising its possession of unearthly influence superior to adverse outward checks, and strengthening its force as he advances in piety and duty. There is absolutely nothing in the Christian revelation to flatter the natural pride of the heart, and in this way win its concurrence, but it recommends itself by its faithful delineations, which honesty cannot evade. It unfolds the character of God, not by laboured eulogy, but by exhibitions of



His attributes, and the known modes of their operations; it so forcibly expresses the native depravity of man, and his destitution of moral power and loveliness; it so exhibits the doctrine of pardon, and the method of a sinner's justification; it so unfolds the person and work of the Mediator, and the agency of the Holy Ghost; that the conviction is fastened upon the thoughtful mind,—“I am the man described, this is the God whom I should worship, this is the plan of salvation suited to my nature and circumstances.” The regeneration of the human soul by the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, immeasurably separate our Christian books from all other writings. These doctrines are taught us in affecting agreement with all that is solemnly majestic, and ineffably tender in Deity; in harmony with His terrible justice, His awful purity, and His boundless mercy; proclaiming free pardon to every penitent man, however wretched or depraved, and yet furnishing the strongest motives to penitence and reformation. There are great natural differences in forms of thought and feeling, and great differences in such things between people of different times and ages; and yet the Bible suits man wherever you find him, comes home alike to eastern and western nations, never gets out of date, and is never outgrown by advancing intelligence. All orders of mind are anticipated, all moods of thought counselled, all circumstances of earthly being provided for. “There is but one book left,” said the brilliant yet disappointed Sir Walter Scott, “but that book is the best, read me a chapter out of St. John's Gospel.”

(*f.*) The revelations and doctrines of the Bible, so toweringly superior to all other books, constitute another of its features which must be pronounced supernatural. Remove it out of the way, and then no certain knowledge of the creation of the world; of the introduction of evil, of the possibility of Divine forgiveness, of the immortality of the soul, and of the destiny of men,

would be left upon the earth. If we appeal to the natural attributes and works of Deity, they furnish us with no moral information nor encouragement. The eulogists of natural religion forget to what an extent their reason is educated by a Divine Revelation. Many of the subjects treated in the Scriptures, are altogether beyond the province of the philosopher or the poet. Who hath known the mind of the Lord? This mind is only revealed in the Word of God. The highest knowledge mute creation can possibly be supposed to impart to us of God, of the soul, and of destiny, is contracted and imperfect. It is possible for a man of great natural firmness to wrap himself in a gloomy resolution, and sternly contemplate annihilation, but how often does this gloomy serenity of a haughty spirit give way before the trifling vexations of life, the dejection of sickness, and the terrors of death? In its most unperturbed calm it is but an abandonment to a corroding melancholy and depressing despair. On the other hand a devout, albeit unscholarly, believer in the Gospel, possesses an antidote to all the sorrows and vanities of life, the ways of Providence if not explained are justified, girding peace and hope realized, and visions of eternal felicity elevate his soul. The Bible teaches us how to find joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, light in darkness, and life in death. It is the most compendious history ever published, containing the earliest antiquities, the most astonishing occurrences, and the profoundest mysteries. Neither the flights of the imagination, nor the inductions of philosophy could ever have educed the discoveries of the Word of God. Socrates admitted that he could only conjecture, and that his best probabilities needed the confirmation of the gods. Since the Bible in its communications surpasses the highest effusions of human genius, furnishing a history that is original and matchless, and revealing necessary and practical truths, lying far beyond the sphere where science and intellect



make their discoveries, can we otherwise accept this than as proof of the superintending influence of the Divine Mind?

(*g.*) Then what shall we say of the sublime and efficient morality of the Bible? We deem it so pure, lofty, and practical, that nothing but a Divine inspiration can account for it. The commendations it bestows on the passive virtues, such as patience, humility, forbearance, forgiveness; and the imperative manner in which it enjoins the regulation of the thoughts and affections, broadly distinguish it from all other books on ethics and theology. Contrast its morality with that of the most civilized nations of antiquity, and how can the fact be accounted for, that a people living in the obscure country of Judea, and professedly inferior, as Horace, Tacitus, and Juvenal tells us, to surrounding kingdoms in culture, philosophy, and science, should yet surpass them all in their ideas of the character and government of God, and in everything pure, beautiful, and lofty in human conduct? From the pages of the Bible moralists have borrowed their noblest maxims, philanthropists their most generous principles, and patriots their grandest incentives. It has done more to bless the world, to promote its brotherhood, to advance its commerce, happiness, and liberty, than all other books together. How is it that the morality of Scripture is a morality not to be found elsewhere, its enemies themselves being judges? How is it that it is always identified with what is upright in policy, lofty in virtue, and permanent in greatness? We know not how to describe the impression, but there is in the Bible something so new, so profound and rich in meaning, so penetrating and positive, and yet so engaging in its presentations, as impart to it unequalled attraction, and secure for it an Alpine ascendancy over all other books. Its simplicity and naturalness, are as marvellous as the depth and extent of its discoveries, and the inexhaustibleness of its blessings. The spirit it inculcates is adapted to

the inhabitants of all lands, and diffusive and strong enough to irradiate every family and scene of earth. The influences of its morality, are the subtle and mighty influences of light, of love, of truth; and manifestations of its humanizing and sanctifying power, upon every variety of character, learned or illiterate, civilized or savage, are revealed in every region under heaven. The precepts and discourses of the Blessed Book abound with flashes of moral insight, which light up the deepest recesses of the human soul, inspiring hope whilst producing humility; quickening and exalting conscience, whilst relieving its apprehension. In the first days of Christianity the younger Pliny was led by his office to institute something like an examination, into the conduct and principles of the new sect everywhere spoken against. In his letter to the Emperor Trajan he stated, that he discovered nothing but; "That they were wont to meet together on a stated day before it was light, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a solemn oath not to the commission of any wickedness, not to be guilty of any fraud, robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them, when called upon to return it." It is indisputable that the moral excellence of the Bible is beyond all comparison. Now whence this excellence? The stream cannot rise higher than its source; the effect cannot be greater than the cause. From the men of neighbouring countries it could not come, for the morality of the Bible is in direct antagonism to the teachings of every school of philosophy, or sect of religionists, with which history has made us familiar; it could not have been originated by the writers themselves, since its exalted principles, and the ineffable sublimity of the motives by which it is enforced, immeasurably surpass the conceptions of the unaided powers of men. You will remember that the Greek language, with all its wealth of words, had no term for the Christian virtue of humility, until the



Apostle to the Gentiles framed one for it, and for this the moral poverty of the classic speech compelled him to resort to the root conveying the idea, not of self-abasement in the consciousness of utter unworthiness in the sight of a pure and holy God, but of positive debasement, meanness, and miserableness of spirit\*. Men's choice of words is generally determined by their habitual thoughts and life, but could moral teachers frame an ethical system founded on qualities whose very existence their language, and of course the conscious self-knowledge of the people, did not recognize? If the peerless morality of Holy Scriptures be not of earth, there is but the alternative, that it has been given by Inspiration of God.

(*h.*) The felicitous, simple, and majestic style and manner of the sacred writers, are excellencies that indicate they are inspired by God in a sense in which no other writers are. The old Testament is the rich treasury of all the sublimity of thought, moving tenderness of passion, and vigorous strength of expression, which are found in all languages by which mortals declare their minds. Do you ask for writings to delight the fancy, to arouse and stretch the soul, to improve the heart? search the Scriptures, here you will find the object of your pursuit, here you will banquet your highest powers and holiest feelings. Where else will you find such graceful imagery, such moving strokes of pathos, such vividness of description, such direct and affecting appeals? Where will you find poetry so chaste and brilliant, narrative so simple and majestic, oratory so arousing and artless? Let the writings of the Apostles be compared, for instance, with those of the apostolical fathers, and you at once pass from simplicity to puerility, from grandeur to extravagance. In the matter of time little separates them, but in style they are immeasurably apart. The description of Christ appeasing the storm, I may instance as a finished piece

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\* See Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language."

of composition. The entire narrative is comprised in four short sentences, but we seem to hear the rushing of the winds, the roaring of the waters, and the voices of the mariners. We behold the Saviour peacefully reclining in sleep amidst the tumult and perils of the tempest, and when awakened by His disciples, arising in all the calm dignity of Omnipotence, and rebuking it to stillness. No waste of words, no boasting, but a narrative of simple majesty. The compositions of Clement, Polycarp, Hermas, and Irenæus, have come down to us, and we cannot but perceive that they were altogether incapable of writing the Gospels; their writings are deeply imbued with piety, but abound in weak reasonings, in idle conceits, in ostentatious phraseology, in many follies and fables. You cannot place on a par Paul's noble argument for the Resurrection, and Clement's story of the Phœnix; Hermas's visions of the future, and the glorious apocalypse of John. "As if by some providential instinct, each one of those fathers who stood nearest the apostolic writers plainly contrasted his writing with theirs, and placed himself upon a lower level. The fact is most significant, for it shows in what way the formation of a New Testament was an intuitive act of the Christian body, derived from no reasoning, but realized in the course of its natural growth as one of the first results of its self-consciousness. Polycarp, who had listened to St. John, freely confesses that neither he, nor any like him, is able to attain fully to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul.\*"

There are portions of the melodies and soarings of Scripture writers that all have confessed, friend and foe, to be superlatively matchless. The life of Joseph is told with such a beauty of sentiment, a profundity of feeling, and a fidelity to nature, that it has not yet been approached in human authorship. The songs of David sweep the chords of the heart with a force not elsewhere

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\* "The Bible in the Church," by Rev. B. F. Westcott, M.A. p. 88.



found, while the strains of Isaiah eclipse and render meagre every human rival in majesty of thought and fulness of expression. Other writers there are in the Holy Book that probe the conscience, that dissect the heart that infuse into their compositions an arresting power, an air of earnestness and transparency of marvellous force. And I may ask you to bear in mind this fact, that the Bible bears translation into other languages as no other book does. It is at home, and in power, among all races and tongues. Everywhere these translations carry with them words able to make men wise unto salvation. "The diction of Scripture is not," remarks the present Bishop of Lincoln, "the language of any other composition in the world. The Greek of the New Testament is not the Greek of Xenophon, Plato, or Demosthenes. It is a language of its own, and we need not scruple to affirm, that in precision of expression, in pure and native simplicity, in delicacy of handling, in the grouping of words and phrases, in dignified and majestic sublimity, it has no rival."

(i.) The transforming and self-propagating power of the Bible is another of the features we must pronounce divine. The private reading of Holy Scripture has been to multitudes a spiritual transformation. Even fragments of the sacred page have been quickening and life-giving, the Book by itself demonstrating its Divine power. When did the Iliad renovate a human soul? What effect upon the moral nature of man, or the development of his highest faculties, which alone can bring him into communion with his Maker, have the writings of the greatest Greek and Latin authors had? What proof have we that the compositions of Shakespeare ever generated piety, and produced peace in the terrors of death? Reading the Bible is conversing with divinity, and pacing a temple of celestial wisdom and excellence, and through its vocabulary the infinite God condescends to enter into communion with human

spirits. The province then of a teachable disposition is to study that which is revealed, to walk in its light, to become permeated with its influence. That which Inspiration communicates, prayer and sincerity receive, and afterwards there will come the realization of a moral likeness to the Author of Inspiration. The Word of God propagates itself from mind to mind, from clime to clime, and from age to age. It retains a vital principle of self-renovation, and although at times it may have appeared to faint and miscarry, its heavenly power has again presented itself fresh and vigorous. It disseminates itself, and contemplates nothing less than a universal diffusion. As we have before noted, Christianity has secured the highest places of earth, and will never yield its vantage ground. For one, I cherish a certain hope that in the long run it will proclaim its possession of all nations, and the conquest of the world.

(j.) Then finally here, the continuous unity of the sacred writers, notwithstanding their diversified mass of materials, the different places and circumstances of their lives, their varying mental capacities, and the period of at least sixteen centuries over which their compositions extended—that principle of harmonious combination which blends the entire miscellany into one natural whole, can only be explained by acknowledging the presiding influence of an all-seeing and over-ruling Mind. Uniformity is the natural consequence of a limited design; unity is the outward expression of one great principle embodied in many ways. The breadth of sympathy which the Bible writers exhibit, their extent of view, and their progressive development, all working to one end, and forming a magnificent concurring testimony, must be proof of a scheme and design beyond man. The Bible is a collection of fragmentary records, written by thirty-seven different persons, without any concerted connection, at distant epochs, and under very varied circumstances, yet manifesting one plan, and gradually advancing in light and truth;



to state this is but to assert that the writers were the agents of a common guide, even the Spirit of the living God. Notwithstanding its manifoldness, the names of the Bible indicate its unity, such as the "Holy Scriptures," the "Word of God," the "Book," and does not "this unity in variety speak of Him who has harmonized by unity of the simplest laws the wonderful variety of our external world?"

ALIQUIS. This summary of the characteristics of the Holy Volume does furnish, I readily acknowledge, corroborative evidence of its specific and supermundane Inspiration. I agree with you that these things make the difficulties of unbelief very formidable. I cannot imagine that designing or visionary men could have produced a book exhibiting views of the character of God, and of the nature and destinies of the human soul, more exalted and just than can be discovered in any other writings; a book comprising a code of morals so pure, so refined, so elevating, and withal so rational, as to constitute it altogether matchless; a book whose provisions of glad tidings have filled the hearts of thousands with peace and joy in all circumstances of life, and with rapture and triumph in the presence of death. "This great epic," as Lord Hatherley phrases it, "of the creation, fall, and restoration of man," cannot be the production of falsehood and imposture. It fairly claims a supernatural origin and history.

NEMO. I think so. Christian believers are not fanatical and enthusiastic people, but able to weigh evidences, able to discriminate between appearances and realities, and too honest to proclaim that to be true of which they have secret fears and misgivings. For anything we know to the contrary, the Creator of the human mind may have access to it by a thousand ways, but the objector speaks as if Inspiration were impossible, or beguiles himself with the notion that it can only take place according to a mode he happens to conjecture. How unreasonable is all this. Wisdom dic-

tates that on every moral question we ought to embrace that opinion which is encumbered with fewest difficulties, and recommended by a preponderating weight of evidence, and the judgment you have just uttered is very rational, that to surrender the miraculous origin of Christianity is only to place ourselves in a position where we shall have to encounter more difficulties than Christian faith imposes upon us. "The evidence of religion," says Butler, "is fully sufficient for all the purposes of probation, how far soever it is from being satisfactory as to the purposes of curiosity, or any other; and, indeed, it answers the purposes of the former in several respects, which it would not do if it were as overbearing as is required."

ALIQUIS. We are looking at the argument for the truth and authority of Holy Scripture in what I may term a collective form. Most people will go as far as we have gone, and yet entertain doubts or reservations respecting every portion of the Bible. So that I am anxious to propose such questions as these—How do we know that there are not more inspired writings than those which have come down to us? How do we prove the genuineness and preservation of the Christian Revelation, and that the true words of God are in our Bibles?

NEMO. I have before remarked on the apparent ingenuous commendations which sceptical individuals pass on Christianity. They appear to me to be inconsistent, in not adducing an adequate cause for the remarkable facts and exalted principles which they eulogize, if not reverence. For my own part I cannot see how error and truth can be mixed up in God's Word, so that while much is found there to delight, much must be rejected as fabulous and irrational. If Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, whatever be the abstract wisdom and purity of the religion He taught, was an impious impostor, or a wild fanatic; for He  
ed the authority and the attributes of Divinity;



and His disciples were miserable deceivers, untruthful, or deluded simpletons. So that I prefer on the science of religion, the classification which merges all religions into human and Divine. Of course there are some grains of truth in all religions, some basal principles we need not discard. But the religion of the Incarnation, the religion of the Divine Atonement, the religion of the Sanctifying Spirit is one and alone, among all mythologies and religions. Charity towards other systems must not lead us to be traitorous to that scheme of truth and precept, which exclusively is the power of God unto salvation,—the religion not of the pharisee, but of the publican, the religion of repentance and humiliation, the religion of no caste, but of humanity ; in which we discover the proofs of a Divine Wisdom and Love in the government of all the races of mankind. That religion stands by itself, distinct from all others, the *once for all*\*, “Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.”

Let us look at your inquiry into the genuineness and preservation of Holy Scripture. We are living in the nineteenth century, and have the Bible with us. Mark its table of contents, the names of its separate books, and the order in which we read them. Let us go back to the eighteenth, the seventeenth, and sixteenth century—and demonstrative proof abounds of its existence and power. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century the discovery of printing was applied to the publication of the Greek New Testament ; Erasmus, at Bâle, and Cardinal Ximenes, at Alcala, taking as the basis of the work such manuscripts as were at their command. The earliest printed copies of the Old and New Testament Scriptures vary it is true from ours in grammatical forms, but these have no bearing on matters of an historical and dogmatic value. In every century up to the Apostolic ages, we find references to the existence and authority of the Scriptures. The oldest copies of the Bible known to exist are three ; one in the British

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\* Jude, iii verse.

Museum, one in the Vatican library at Rome, and one in the Imperial library at St. Petersburg. It is very probable all these were written less than four hundred years after the ascension of our Lord. Of the Old Testament there are still older copies, and there is strong evidence that the substance of our modern Bible has remained unaltered since its first delivery to the world. The Greek New Testament of the nineteenth century is substantially identical with that of the fourth century; the Hebrew old Testament with that of still older date; and it may be safely concluded, that both our Old and New Testament Scriptures are the same as were left to the Christian Church by the Apostles, who lived unto the latter half of the first century. The list of the books of the Old Testament given by Josephus, who died before the close of the first Christian century, exactly coincides with our own, and in the second and third centuries, Christian apologists and historians so fully quote from the New Testament, that it is supposed a full copy of these Scriptures might be compiled from their writings. These earliest fathers of the Church professedly cited from the compositions of the Evangelists and the Apostles, and their works have come down to us, which we find to agree minutely with our copies of the New Testament canon. Remember that neither the Apocrypha, nor any other pretended sacred writings, are quoted by the Christian writers of the first centuries. No other books than those which we now possess were deemed authoritative and canonical, and none have been lost that were accepted as inspired and genuine.

By the close of the first century, as we have seen, the Christian religion had spread through the greater part of the civilized world, and with it were circulated numerous copies, either in whole or part, of the New Testament Scriptures. Who then could corrupt them? Would they agree in all places at the same time, without any understanding among themselves, to erase the



Inspired words, and substitute their own ? This could not have been in the time of the Apostles, for the forgery would have been at once discovered ; it could not have been after, since the writings were too well known, and the copies too numerous to be altered. The agreement of all the ancient manuscripts that have come down to us, testifies in a striking manner to the textual genuineness of the New Testament canon of Holy Scripture. The Christians at Rome, for instance, had copies of some parts of the New Testament, so had the Christians at Jerusalem, and at other places. Admitting that the first original copies are lost, upwards of six hundred manuscripts have reached us, most of them unquestionably of great antiquity, and they agree in containing the same doctrines, precepts, and promises found in our modern Scriptures. These manuscripts have been critically examined, and although variations in letters and words have been detected, which may be easily accounted for by the process of transcription, the realities and articles of our faith are preserved in imperial fulness and integrity. That acute and powerful writer, Tertullian, who wrote scarcely a hundred years after the death of John, in his reply to Marcion, who had impugned the authenticity of the Gospels, bases his argument on the ground, that at the time when the Apostolical Church was founded, all the four Gospels were accredited. He propounds as a test of the truth of the early Christian writings, the inexpugnable canon of historical criticism, that what was held as true in his day, should be judged in the light of its prior acceptance. If these writings had been accepted before as true, it was fair to suppose they had been equally accepted in the time of the Apostles,—the Church established by them certifying that they were inspired and authoritative.\* We might at greater length vindicate the ground on which we rest the belief that the Gospels and Epistles which we read and revere are the same

\* "History of the Canon of the New Testament," by Rev. B. F. Westcott, M.A.

that were read by the early Christians, the same given by the Inspiration of God.

If this can be admitted in reference to the New Testament books, we advance much in support of the Old Testament Scriptures, for they are vitally connected. The Jews were most reverential in the treatment of their Scriptures, arranging and numbering their very words and letters, and scrupulously exact in preserving an account of both. Charged by Christ, as they were, with many vices and errors during His ministry among them, He never once reproved them for corrupting or altering the sacred text. "Search the Scriptures" was His command; or as we may read it, "Ye do search the Scriptures;" but what Scriptures had they then to search? The evangelists had not drawn up their incomparable narratives, nor had the Apostles penned their epistles; the Saviour's words must, therefore, be regarded as referring to the Old Testament compositions, which were regularly read in the synagogues of the Jews, and to which they had constant access. Add to this that Christ and His Apostles appealed to these Scriptures, quoted them, reasoned from them, and thus proved that in their days they were unadulterated and complete. Our Lord quotes or refers to twenty-two of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, and not once to the Apocrypha. Then the Old Testament books claim association with scenes and dates much earlier, and in tracing them up the stream of time, unimpeachable witnesses are found in ancient records, traditions, and monuments, to their peculiar and influential existence. They were translated into Greek three hundred years before Christ, and not less than thirteen hundred manuscripts of great antiquity are now extant, containing more or less correct portions of the older canon. Before the Christian era the Jews and the Samaritans, by their rivalries and jealousies over the Scriptures, tended to preserve their purity, and since their time the Christians and the Jews



have acted as checks upon each other, both contributing towards the integrity of the sacred text, since nothing from one party could have been falsified or omitted, without the detection and exposure of the other. The writing materials of the ancients were stones and rocks. It was common among Eastern nations to inscribe upon rocks, pillars, and stones of temples, with more or less rudeness or elegance, narratives of victories or matters of national interest. The patriarch Job, you may remember, refers to this custom in expressing his wish that his words might be "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever." So that just now, as you know, we have a confirmation of the historical accuracy of the Old Testament history in 2 Kings, chapter iii., in the discovery of the "Moabite Stone." It does not contradict—as some would have prophesied if not desired—but remarkably confirms the recitals of Inspiration. Here I must add, that archæological discoveries in Nineveh, Persepolis, and Palestine, have so wonderfully authenticated Old Testament records, that cultured and studious men have been led to their careful examination. So the attacks of Renan on Christ and His Apostles have led candid men, especially on the continent, to examine the New Testament for themselves. On honestly historical and acknowledged principles we are warranted in affirming that we have sufficient reason for believing that our modern Holy Books contain the genuine preserved words of God. Every ancient work has been transmitted to us by means of manuscript, and we have the original autographs of none. We are indebted in every case to copyists for what we possess, and in the same manner the books of Scripture have reached us, subjected to the same casualties as other books; but no unworthy argument for their Inspiration may be drawn from the fact that the perfection of Scripture has not been suffered to be impaired, since they are with us marvellously authenticated. Bryant, the author of a dissertation concerning the

"War of Troy," writes: "The more we search into the very ancient records of Rome or Greece, the greater darkness and uncertainty ensue, but when we encounter the Sacred Volume, even in parts of a far higher antiquity, the deeper we go the greater treasures we find. The various parts are so consistent that they afford mutual illustration, and the more earnestly we look the greater light accrues, and consequently the greater satisfaction." And this is the judgment of the most painstaking, erudite, and competent writers of the present day. With respect to sacred forgeries and imitations, you must bear in mind that every work of genius calls forth productions of attempted resemblance, so the writings of the Scriptures have led presumptuous and enthusiastic persons to imitate their style and sentiment. This was a result to be expected, but evidence in favour of the Bible is deducible from it, since, as the shadow implies the substance, and the counterfeit the real article, so garbled and apocryphal writings, imply the existence of documents genuine and true.

ALIQUIS. You spoke of prophecy as evidencing the Inspiration of Holy Scripture. It is clear that many of the declarations of the sacred writers are in the form and language of prediction; how do you indicate the argumentative proof in favour of the Divine origin and authority of Scripture from prophecy?

NEMO. I place prophecies and miracles in the same category in relation to Holy Scripture, viewing them, not as anomalies, but as accompaniments to communications from an Omniscient and Everlasting Jehovah. It is the glory of man's intellectual nature that neither his materials of thought, nor his resources of enjoyment are circumscribed by the limits of actual perception. Memory vividly recalls the past, and imagination and hope picture scenes to come. The remembrance of the past, and the anticipations of the future, in man, however, are bounded by narrow limits of time, and space, and circumstance. But here we gain a glimpse of the



mind of the Eternal. He who is the Fountain of all being, power, and intelligence, as distinctly knows the future as the past. He foresees it, and can disclose events leading to it, concealed from human sight by an impenetrable veil. Prophecy can belong only to prescience, and prescience can be attributed only to that mind which is at once omniscient and omnipotent. The question before us, then, is this—Has God empowered His servants in various ages to record predictions of future events? Then the comparison of those prophecies, with their subsequent fulfilment, must be accepted as convincing and irrefragable proof of the inspiration and authority of the book in which they are found.

Prophecy is a miracle of knowledge, a declaration or description of something future, beyond the power of human foresight to discover or to calculate, and while a sublime testimony to the omniscient and infallible wisdom of God, is a sure evidence of the truth of Revelation. Prophecy, springing from the Eternal, is the image of the infinite. His language is; "I am God, and there is none like Me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done." The force of prophetic evidence arises from the discovery it affords of Jehovah's omniscience, and since no creature of himself can disclose future events, the power to do so must be Divine. Prophecy is not a transient miracle, but a permanent one, open to our inspection, and strengthening to future ages. To render prophecy an evidence of a Divine revelation it must bear the application of specific tests. There must be full and satisfactory proof, that the prophecy was both recorded and promulgated before the event which it describes took place; the accordance between the prediction and the event must be obvious and palpable, having a particular, and not a mere general agreement; the event must be one which no human sagacity or foresight could foretel. If we can find a single pro-

phesy, clearly distinguished by these characteristics, it must be admitted that we establish a proof of Divine prescience, and this given us by a human being, furnishes evidence of His Divine inspiration. There are three classes of prophecies—those of the Old Testament of which the accomplishment is recorded in the New,—those both of the Old and New Testaments, of the fulfilment of which we have well-attested records,—and those both of the Old Testament and of the New which remain unfulfilled. As an illustration of the singular force of prophetic evidence, let me ask you to ponder its striking testimony relative to the Messiah. On this point the Jews themselves, as it has been said, are our librarians; these prophecies are in their Bibles as well as in ours, and it is an immovable fact that they were not only extant in the original Hebrew, but also in the Greek translation, long before the era of the Gospel history. I might ask you to examine the explicit predictions respecting Egypt, Tyre, Nineveh, and Jerusalem. Let me likewise call your attention to the prophecies predicting the exile of the Jewish people, in part recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. The Jews are at this day the strangest realities among the nations of the earth; “scattered and peeled,” says one, “but never destroyed; poured into the ocean of mankind, but everywhere preserving their waves unmixed; fenced round by unearthly symbols and forms; their sins so human, and the truths to which they cling so superhuman; their history so interwoven with miracles, that to dispute the miracles destroys the history”; constituting the noblest and richest aristocracy of the globe. “To foresee and to foretel future events is a miracle of which the testimony remains in itself; it is as much beyond the ability of human agents, as to cure diseases with a word, or even to raise the dead. The man who reads the prophecy, and perceives the corresponding event, is himself the witness of the miracle.



He sees that thus it is, and that thus by human means it could not possibly have been. So admirably has this kind of evidence been contrived by the wisdom of God that the lapse of ages only confirms its strength."

ALIQUIS. If the Bible be of Divine origin we may assume that in addition to outward and objective evidence of its Inspiration, there would be practical and internal evidence to the same effect, and that this would be an evidence level to every capacity, and open to general observation.

NEMO. We have agreed that the experimental evidence of our holy religion constitutes one of the most satisfactory proofs that the Bible is from God. Christian consciousness must be admitted as a source of facts on the truth of the Gospel. The Bible may be experimented upon, and for a sincere inquirer its pages are instinct with life and blessing. It becomes its own witness by its accordance with the deepest convictions and inward experience of the devout believer, for as "in water face answereth to face," so does the heart of man to the truths the Bible proclaims. His personal consciousness, his happy experience, his pacified conscience, his altered life, aims, and expectations,—directly testify to its Divine power. Other evidences of the Inspiration of the Scriptures he accepts and values, but this is enough of itself to assure him that the Bible is true. And here remember that this is but one of the many pillars which sustain the holy edifice in which I am anxious you should live and die. We have been speaking of a few, and only of a few, of these pillars, but if we could see them all in their accumulative strength, what firmness and solidity would be discovered upholding the Christian's temple of celestial truth and excellence. Yet I am anxious to assure you a little further of the certifying and defensive power of experimental religion. In all ages and in all lands it has been sufficient for the multitudes of mankind. Personal

experience, I may grant you, is not competent to destroy the objections of an unbeliever; but a consciousness that sin is forgiven, a growing earnestness in striving after holiness, and a firm hope of a blissful immortality, are strong tokens to himself that the Bible is true, and that Christ is indeed the appointed Saviour of men. The force and value of this species of Christian evidence cannot be exaggerated. The unlettered, but sincere Christian, may be no match for his opponent in the logic and subtlety of debate, but his convictions suffice to keep off infidelity from himself. He holds the argument of a man who has put a theory to the proof, and found it made good; or tried a certain road, and found that it led him to a place which he sought. Another man, to whom he tells this, may be doubtful of the facts, and therefore reject his inference, but to his own consciousness the argument is invaluable, and absolutely conclusive. If the promises of Scripture be fulfilled to those who act on its precepts, there can be no debate that both promises and precepts are the word of the Living God; otherwise God would give His attestation to falsehood, and set the signet of His approval on the worst of all forgeries. However poor and illiterate our village Christian may be, and however unequal to defend the outworks of religion against a bold and cunning assailant, he possesses an armoury in the strength of his own experience that repels the assaults of the enemy of his faith. He enjoys a tranquillity of mind, never realized until in penitence and faith he received the Gospel of Christ; his affections are subjugated to a holy control; his desires refined and sublimated; his fears of trouble and of death subdued; his hopes of being in glory everlasting vigorous and abiding. In every relationship of life he is a better, wiser, more useful and loveable man. Now I put it to you, are these the fruits of falsehood; are these the fruits of a religion coined by enthusiasts, and un-



worthy the approval of sagacious and erudite men? This man who lives in the habit of communing with God, and holds in his heart a happy sense of reconciliation, needs not the gift of prophecy, nor the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, nor the accumulated occurrences of century after century, to bear witness to the Inspiration of Scripture, he has an imperviousness of evidence that no insinuation or attack of the sceptic can disturb.

The internal character of the Holy Scriptures reflects the image of God's moral goodness, and proves from the sublime nature, and pure and happy tendency of their doctrines, that they are Divine. Next in importance to the question, is there a living Word of God? is that other question, does this Word live in me? It may live in our hearts by the possession of its blessings, and thus be the proof positive of its truth and preciousness. In the words of an ancient confession of faith, "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and Divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with, and by the Word in our hearts." This is the best, because the shortest and surest proof that the Bible is true. The understanding is clarified by the humility and purification of the heart. It is childish, it is petulant and unreasonable to say, we cannot find certainty in religion, and satisfaction in its evidences. This with too many is a mere excuse, a manifestation of mental pride, and a discovery of an unthankful and rebellious heart. "There is light enough," says Pascal, "for those whose sincere wish is to see, and darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition." The word duty is the key to the difficulties of Christian evidences, for it implies the possibility of resisting obligations and commands. If duty be neglected, mystery continues; if penitence and obedience prevail, the secret of the Lord is given, and joy and peace in believing follow. "To discern and judge rightly of

spiritual truth is not mainly the work of the logical understanding, nor of rough and round common sense. To do this requires that another capacity be awake in a man, a spiritual apprehension, or, call it by what name you may, a deeper, more internal light, which shall be behind the understanding, as it were, informing and illuminating it. For otherwise the understanding, however powerful or acute, attains not to spiritual truth. This power of spiritual apprehension is, though not identical with the moral nature, more akin to it, belongs more to this side of our being than to the intellectual.\*"

The benign and practical influences, of the Christian religion cannot be overstated. Instances of its sovereign efficacy are to be met with wherever it has appeared, certifying that it is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "Give me," says Lactantius, "a man who is choleric, abusive, headstrong, and unruly, and with a few words—the words of God—I will render him gentle as a lamb. Give me an unjust man, a foolish man, a vicious man; and on a sudden he shall become honest, wise, and virtuous. Did, or could, any of our heathen philosophers accomplish such important purposes as these?" And proofs are by no means rare or unusual at the present day, of the abiding holy and beneficent efficacy of the Gospel. I repeat then, the man who is the subject of an internal renovation has the witness in himself to the truth of the Bible. In the first instance, especially in a Christian country, he received it upon the recommendation of others, but he has now acquired an experimental acquaintance with it, and possesses a personal certitude of its truth. There is nothing to forbid this individual being a philosopher, a man of science, or an historian, but his inward transformation of character is something more than convictions resulting from induction and argumentation. The tender, hallowing, ele-

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\* "Culture and Religion," by Professor Shairp.



vating, workings of the Gospel in his own heart, form the fastest and crowning evidence of the truth of the Christian faith, for as no reasonings in the world could be so powerful to convince him of the existence of the sun, as his own enjoyment and perceptions of the light and heat of that glorious luminary, so nothing can exceed in strength this proof of the Divine truth of the Gospel, arising from the consciousness of God's own manifestation to his soul. The doctrine enunciated by Professor Faraday, that when a principle is really established on such grounds as to approve itself undeniably to the mind and conscience, then "no hypothesis should be admitted, nor any assertion of a fact credited, that denies the principle," should be more influential among Christian believers in these times. A thankful and hearty welcome may be given to facts declared to be such by competent authorities, but haughty declarations, disrespectful estimates of Scripture, and suspicions and speculations respecting biblical historic certainties, should be disregarded, by the man who is a "new creature in Christ Jesus." He knows but one book, "The Divine Library," as Jerome was wont to call it, as early as the fourth century, and it is sufficient, its own and fullest witness to its Divine authority. These abiding convictions in the minds and consciences of Christian believers are facts, and it is not reverent nor respectful to ignore them, to designate them delusion, fanaticism, and ignorance. They are the firmest principles of many an honest and upright man's life, who has as strong belief in them as in his own existence. If we dispute the realities and certitude of consciousness, where are we, and what the bond in human society?

But further here, let us hold likewise to other facts, to facts not speculations, nor theories. Incontrovertible truth abides with the Bible. History, natural and civil, sacred and profane, renders a uniform and costly tribute to the veracity of its records. These records have

passed every mode of trial, received every conceivable attestation, and are triumphant in the present day in the face of the world. The Gospel history must be true, or all history false, and the whole of the past be reduced to a universal blank. A disdainful allusion to "the evidences of Christianity" does not disprove the certainty of the birth, the labours, the miracles, the matchless character, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, of Jesus of Nazareth. Here is the heart of Christianity, and it cannot be destroyed. We have been adverting, not only to the incontestible truth of the Bible's history, but to heaven's seals to its writers, in plain and beneficent miracles; we have appealed to the attestation of prophecies; the sublime grandeur of its doctrines; the purity of its precepts; the unfailing exactness of its adaptations to universal man; and have found them to be facts, and the Christian system a theme of boundless exultation. Notwithstanding the attacks and aspersions of our day, what conclusions have been arrived at to hinder Christianity from occupying our pulpits, or have destroyed one fact of Christian doctrine hitherto held sacred by the Christian Church? What chapter of the Bible can we no longer read as a record of truth? Some statements and theories long influential may have been disturbed and refuted, but what long-established facts have perished? Holy Scripture is suffering in our age from aspersions, speculations, and imaginary scientific contradictions; but on the fields of scholarship, and in the laboratories of criticism, its challengers have been fairly met, and it still remains with the decisive stamp of Divinity upon it. In every way it is our duty and advantage to cleave to it. It is worse than nonsense to talk of mind cramping religious dogmas and antiquated Biblical notions. We are thankful that there is something, in these days of change and hypothesis, clear and settled. The sun, like the Bible, is antiquated; but his beams are ever fresh and welcome—the emblems of a more precious



and expanding light for the soul of man, when Christian truth shall return to the bosom of the Godhead, whence it sprang, and where, after its conflicts are over, it will dwell for ever.

Our lot is cast in perilous times, but the charges against our holy faith prove not to be facts, but suspicions, speculations, doubts; and yet these will prove we fear the shipwreck of the faith of numbers. But never let us dream that God will desert His Church, or suffer His Revealed Truth to be destroyed. Humble and penitent prayer for enlightenment and guidance will be our wisdom and strength. The best judges of Scripture and sound doctrine have ever been those who, with an honest and upright heart, endeavour to do the will of God, and without despising learning, or skill, or criticism, such men pursue the safe and useful tenor of their way, and live and die happily in the sanctuary of God's truth. I cannot too seriously repeat, that want of firmness of faith among Christians is a great source of weakness. If they cannot answer the difficulties, explain objections, and silence cavils, they need not be disturbed, other sincere believers, of more experience and knowledge, can do this. They have received the testimony which God has given of His Son, they know that God hears prayer, they are begotten again unto a lively hope, and look forward with inspiring confidence to a blessed futurity of happiness with God in heaven. How can all that be erroneous, delusive, and of human contrivance, which secures to them such solid happiness and brilliant anticipations? Let them live and act as if certain of their own convictions, and conscious of inward possessions of peace and joy, which the world certainly has not given, and which it cannot take away. "Certitude is the knowledge of a truth; but what is once true is always true, and cannot fail, whereas what is once known need not always be known, and is capable of failing. It follows, that if I am certain of a thing, I believe it will remain

what I now hold it to be, even though my mind should have the bad fortune to let it drop. Since mere argument is not the measure of assent, no one can be called certain of a proposition, whose mind does not spontaneously and promptly reject, on their first suggestion, as idle, as impertinent, as sophistical, any objections which are directed against its truth. No man is certain of a truth, who can endure the thought of the fact of its contradictory existing or occurring; and that not from any set purpose or effort to reject it, but, as I have said, by the spontaneous action of the intellect. What is contradictory to it, with its apparatus of argument, fades out of the mind as fast as it enters it; and though it be brought back to it ever so often by the pertinacity of an opponent, or by a voluntary or involuntary act of imagination, still that contradictory proposition and its arguments are mere phantoms and dreams, in the light of our certitude, and their very entering into the mind is the first step of their going out of it.\*

It is not assent to the teachings and authority of the Church, however cordial and entire; it is not faith in the Bible as a Divine Revelation, however sincere and confident; which bringeth personal salvation, but rather the penitent and hearty reception of the facts which the Bible narrates, and which the Church proclaims and enforces. It is the simple, complete, and loving embrace of the fact that Christ died for the ungodly, and was raised again for their justification, that realizeth the forgiveness of sins, and the blessed hope of heaven. The Church was in existence before some portions of Holy Scripture were written. So that personal godliness is based, not on the words of Scripture, but on the truths which these words enunciate. However much we may know, to whatever extent Biblical truth may illuminate our understanding, and improve our condition, its work is not accomplished unless it correct and

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\* Newman's "Grammar of Assent." p. 191.



purify the emotional and moral nature of man. The Bible may be received as from heaven, while the heart is in moral darkness and impurities. Such a one may be thoroughly acquainted with the scheme of salvation, and believe in the everlasting awards accruing both to the wicked and the righteous, and yet not be a Christian believer in the New Testament sense of that word. This individual may have light, but it is not spiritual light; he may have faith, but it is not saving faith; he may have influence, but it is not sanctifying influence; he may have joy, but it is not holy joy; he may entertain strong hope, but it is not a "good hope through grace." It is important to bear in mind that the forgiving favour of God, and Divine sonship follow a penitent and obedient trust in facts. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"—believe that there is a Jesus Christ, and who dare say there is not? believe that He is equal with the Father in wisdom and power and glory,—believe that He lived on earth and suffered and died as man's substitute and atonement,—believe that He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and ever liveth to make intercession for us;—believe this, and who can disprove these statements? and "thou shalt be saved." Christ Himself thus speaks; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Hence, I repeat here, it is assuring that the Gospel should be called "The Truth." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." "Who hath bewitched you," inquires the Apostle, "that ye should not obey the truth?" Of the well-beloved Gaius, St. John says, "I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth." Truth in its general and comprehensive import signifies, that which is conformable to fact. Truth is essential to God, because of His

infinite knowledge and integrity, and the Christian Religion being designated truth, supplies us with a high and honourable account of it, since it is affirming that all its revelations and doctrines,—past, present, and to come, visible or invisible,—are perfectly conformable to the reality of things. When you hear the flippant man in any place contradicting the testimony of history, and aspersing Scripture by speaking of the Bible as abounding in beautiful legends and myths, I implore you, turn a deaf ear to his insinuations, remembering our Saviour has said of it, “Thy Word is Truth.”

Man cannot live, nor society flourish, without this truth. Whatever science and philosophy, art and civilization, may effect for mankind, they will never supersede the necessity of religion. Man is greatly indebted to the wisdom and instruction of his fellow beings, but possessed as he is of such profound and impulsive religious instincts and cravings, left to the highest human culture, he would be unprovided for and degraded. There is something in him, call it what you will, and account for it as you may, that cannot be satisfied with the objects of earth. The history of every age witnesses to an undeniable religious need in human nature. If these native and earnest necessities of the soul were only discoverable in an individual man or tribe, they might be ascribed to delusion, to education, or policy, and if found only in one age, or among separate families of the world, they might be attributed to locality, or national tendencies; but they are found in savage and civilized, heathen and Christian lands, the religious sentiment being everywhere present in definite forms and convictions, the deepest, the strongest, and most ineradicable peculiarity of universal man. For one I cannot but suppose, that ere long there will be a great reaction in favour of spiritual and practical Christianity. Human nature itself is now rebelling against the neology, positivism, doubt, and destructive criticism of our



day. Be assured that hollow and unfaithful teachers of Christianity will be visited with a certain retribution, and it may come in this life. Their secret infidelity and sceptical inuendoes, although they are the official and remunerated advocates of the Holy and Divine Gospel, may not long hence recoil on their own heads, and an indignant Christian public reject them. Why not openly discard all association with Christianity, if suspicious of its truthfulness, and despairing of its future triumphs?

One word more, we are safe in attaching, as Holy Scripture does, the greatest solemnity and significance to human nature. We too frequently see it as a fluttering and irresolute thing, pleasure-seeking, money-loving, and ignominious. We see it as if bound to earth, fading and dissolving with its scenes; but this is its eclipse and dishonour. In this age of negativism, mechanical forces, and to some extent we fear of scientific atheism, man is a witness for God, for freedom, for immortality, for a spiritual and experimental Christianity. His longing for help and sense of dependence are the justification of prayer; his feeling of remorse is the testimony to a Divine judgment; his abiding convictions of wrong-doing and consequent guilt, a strong witness to the need of an atonement; his instinct of immortality, the pledge of a life to come. Man's own nature rebukes atheism, by proclaiming God. His conscience speaks with an authority that cannot be called natural, and his moral affinities raise him to the Living Creator, as his sovereign and moral Governor. Man himself, as we shall see in our future conversations, to which you tell me you are looking forward, is a volume of revelations, the nobility and uniqueness of his endowments leading us to the recognition of a spiritual universe, enabling us to vindicate the great doctrines of the Bible, and forming a bulwark against the empiricism and naturalism of our age. We discover the wisdom of Holy Scripture in addressing itself, almost exclusively, to

the moral necessities of man, the recovery of his nature constituting a subject worthy of the mission and instructions of God's Word. What in comparison are the claims of cosmogony, ethnology, antiquities and science, with the elevation and redemption of man's immortal spirit? Two facts we must cling to, that Christianity is a life, something more than a belief, a dogma, a creed, it is the life of God in the human soul, the truths of the Gospel applied by the power of the Holy Spirit to the heart and conscience of penitent and obedient men; and further, that the conscious possession of this life may be enjoyed, and the Bible proved to be True. The gracious and sublime design of Holy Scripture may be told in the words of St. John: "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life."

THE END.



Is there Mind, additional to the  
body, in Man?

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YOUTH AND YEARS

AT

OXFORD,

IN

*Conversation on Questions of the Day.*

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PART 3.

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BY

MANTHANO.

OXFORD: G. SHRIMPTON, 9, TURL STREET.

LONDON: WHITTAKER & CO., AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW.

PLYMOUTH: TRYTHALL, 5, WHIMPLE STREET.

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1872.





## I.

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ALIQUIS. You kindly signified your willingness to see my friend along with me this evening. He is interested in our conversations, and more than once we have talked them over.

NEMO. Be assured of my welcome to you both. I am rewarded by the attention already given by you, Aliquis, to the matters we have had under review. If your friend will take part with us in our free interchanges of inquiry, I shall rejoice. When we first met in that pleasant walk, which has had so much to do with our discussions, I little thought they would have reached the length they have done. You will both understand that I only essay to place before you outlines of important subjects, and indicate the method in which they may be more fully considered. I desire fairly and fully to look in the face, the difficulties and objections that may be raised, and counsel you how to seek more exhaustive knowledge.

QUIVIS. I am obliged by your so kindly admitting a stranger to your amicable discussions. I am desirous of becoming acquainted with the best mode of pursuing such important questions as you have been dilating upon with my friend.

ALIQUIS. The concluding words of our last conversation on the importance of the study of human nature, arrested my attention, and have frequently recurred to my mind. The study of the philosophy of mind, as a corrective of speculative errors, was new to me, and I am eager to listen to your observations on this subject.

QUIVIS. I rejoice also in the prospect of the examination of man's nature, apart from excited feelings and religious enthusiasm. I remarked to my friend, on his recounting your last conversation, that I thought too much prominence had been given to emotions, and inward experiences, as witnesses for the divinity of Holy Scripture. In warring against error I hold that the less uncertain and deceptive feeling be introduced the better, and that in its place the more vigorous weapons of fact and reason should be employed.

NEMO. In some discussions of controverted points too much stress may have been laid on emotions and internal convictions, but you will admit that consciousness is a source of proof of the highest value. "It is to the philosopher," says Sir W. Hamilton, "what the Bible is to the theologian. Both are revelations of the truth, and both afford the truth to those who are content to receive it, as it ought to be received, with reverence and submission. But as it has, too frequently, fared with the one revelation, so has it with the other." I based one branch of Christian evidence on the very laws of thought, and on experience, and if this furnish no foundation for belief, then where will it be found? If you discard my convictions and understanding, my intuitions and consciousness, what is the use of debating with me at all? besides, it should be remarked, that the Bible encourages the emotional type of piety, and addresses itself to the human heart as well as to the human intellect. It aims at communicating the inward possession of the proof of its truth and authority. I was warranted, I judge, in insisting on this species of testimony, because



there is no reasoning against an intelligent persuasion, and no rebutting an inward experience. If a person feel pain, all the argumentation you may bring with a view of proving to him that he ought not to feel it, or does not, will be of no avail. Having once passed through a certain conscious process we cannot be persuaded out of it. The man may be laughed at, and vanquished in logic, but the fact of his experience cannot be destroyed. Then further, since Christianity verifies its truth to me in all that belongs to the domain of consciousness, it thereby offers intelligent presumptions of its truth when it speaks of things beyond my consciousness. The internal verification of the divinity of the gospel strengthens and vindicates its external evidences. Thus in our previous conversation on the question, "Can we be sure the Bible is true?" a penitent reliance on the provisions of the gospel, and the attainment of the transforming and inner power of salvation were urged, for Christianity offers this prize to her obedient subjects. "Christianity," says Coleridge, "finds me in the lowest depth of my being, as no other system can. It meets there my direst needs." Its adaptation to men's character and hearts must be accepted as one proof of its divine origin, and its subjective evidence I ventured to call the impregnable citadel of a Christian's faith, that which has given strength to such as have been opposed by the most specious and insidious reasonings, and that which has nerved apostles, martyrs, and apologists calmly to meet death at the hands of their persecutors. This intelligent consciousness of the inner presence of Godliness, is our best help in preserving a firm trust in the unearthly origin and character of our holy religion. All the vain philosophies in vogue cannot, perhaps, be recounted, nor can there be detailed the subtle insinuations, the severe criticism, and captious sophistry which scepticism in these days is summoning to damage the certitude of our faith; but as long as we walk in the sunbeams of its hallowing and elevating power, we are secure against all assaults, since *we cannot either be driven or allured out of our experience.*

QUIVIS. This is assuming that the subjective witness for Christianity is a fact, and that human beings on earth can gain an intelligent and undeniable consciousness of the transforming peace and dominion of the gospel.

NEMO. Certainly, and it is my duty to say that if you make a personal, humble, and earnest application to your Heavenly Father for this experimental evidence, you will possess it for yourself. Come to the footstool of Divine mercy with a frank acknowledgment of your sinfulness and guilt, come avowing that Christ is the gift of the Father's love, that His self-denying life is the noblest model, that in dying He did homage to law, and suffered what was due to your transgressions, and that the sanctity of holy government, and the purity of God, are more fully maintained than if the guilty had been condemned; admit this and exercise a penitent humble trust in the provisions of redemption, and justified by faith you will realize "peace with God." You will have an assured conviction of a change of heart, of a love of holiness, of an unearthly power over sin, and a happy persuasion of eternal life. This will be a fact, and you will set your seal to it, that the gospel is true. Millions have found by so believing, peace and purity of life, and the demands of their conscience, and the yearnings of their heart have been met. Every genuine believer becomes a witness for Christianity, and human nature may safely be summoned to offer testimony of its truthfulness and adaptation to the needs of our race. It approves itself to be just such a religion as we should expect from Him who endowed man with his moral faculties. That certain form of religion, embracing things to be believed, and things to be done, which made its appearance in an eastern province of the Roman Empire under the government of Tiberias, is truly what it professes to be, a message of salvation to all mankind from the Living God. To discard or doubt the inner witness of loving and obedient hearts to its truth, is to discredit its promises, to disown history, and to reject the



clearest testimony of some of the most intelligent, conscientious, and upright of our fellow-men. In short religion is secured more firmly, I judge, by the analysis of the facts of consciousness than by the highest intellectual conceptions.

ALIQUIS. We cannot be too thankful, for this internal testimony to the truth of the Bible, nevertheless, I cannot help adding, that it is too often hypocritically assumed, and is not in every case to be relied upon. Then our age is not tolerant of dogmatic religious teaching, of ecclesiastical traditions, nor of a supernatural element in the experience of daily life; so that on this particular branch of Christian evidence we are required to proceed with the greatest discrimination. I must also add that feeling divorced from morality is worse than worthless,—it is impious.

NEMO. This is true, for supernatural testimony is conclusive only to the person to whom it is given, yet character and actions are to him auxiliary witnesses of its genuineness, as well as real proof to others. But remember that this evidence is offered to all on conditions that may be obeyed by all. I believe in the province and power of faith, as well as in that of reason. To define the exact boundaries of the two would be a work of considerable difficulty, but we shall agree in a conclusion like this, that while faith may go beyond reason it can never go against it without incurring the charge of folly and enthusiasm. I would not argue the value of the inner consciousness of the truth of the gospel on the ground merely of its usefulness, nor because divines have generally insisted upon it, but rather from the fact that it is a reasonable doctrine, the human mind being so constructed that it cannot remain true to itself, and at the same time disbelieve such a doctrine. It can be shewn that it is more rational to believe in the reality and authority of this experience than in the opposite opinion, and that it claims the sanction of a self-evidencing proof. A genuine believer can triumphantly

maintain that there is nothing truer than the gospel, and therefore we are bound to teach and enforce the philosophy of this subjective evidence of Christianity. And although I value this evidence as at once the strongest to convince, and the easiest to understand, yet I would depreciate no other—historical, scientific, miraculous, prophetic, or literary,—since knowledge is as essential to the possession of religion as feeling.

QUIVIS. Here, sir, you are providing us with solid ground to stand upon. "It is absurd," says Kant, "to expect to be enlightened by reason, and at the same time prescribe to her what side of the question she must adopt." We should not enter upon any investigations, including even the truth of Scripture, with our hands tied, but be ready to admit that we may be in error, and our opponent in possession of the truth. You will concede that our great beliefs are surrounded with many difficulties, but our strength will be to shew that they are reasonable, and that it is impossible to be rational and not believe them. All students of truth in these days must be free from the restrictions which policy and law have imposed upon the teachers of religion. Notwithstanding the strong resistance which the guardians of our faith have shewn, it must be admitted that criticism and natural science have forced the surrender of some points in their creed, and I imagine that many propositions which are now held to be true, will in their turn have to be modified to square with unquestionable facts. Ancestral belief will never again have the influence it has in the past possessed, and candid minds should be encouraged to attain such measures of truth as the intellectual condition of our age fits us to assimilate. "In the scientific study of religion, which now shews signs of becoming for many a year an engrossing subject of the world's thought, the decision must not rest with a council in which the theologian, the metaphysician, the biologist, the physicist, exclusively take part. The historian and the ethnographer, must



be called upon to shew the hereditary standing of each opinion and practice, and their inquiry must go back as far as antiquity or savagery can shew a vestige, for there seems no human thought so primitive as to have lost its bearing on our own thought, nor so ancient as to have broken its connection with our own life."

NEMO. I agree with nearly all you have just stated, and especially with the quotation you have given us from Tylor's "Primitive Culture," a book I have read with interest. With great ingenuity he endeavours to shew that civilization, philosophy, and religion, have sprung out of savagery, and that all that is now beautiful and pure in human life, had its germ in primitive thought and usage. But this is only a theory,—a theory indeed which may be forcibly used in defence of the great truths on which our inner life is fed. Though fully aware that some of his doctrines might seem to favour the interests of infidelity, and bear against Christian truth, he remarks: "I have felt neither able nor willing to enter into this great argument fully and satisfactorily, while experience has shewn that to dispose of such questions by an occasional dictatorial phrase, is one of the most serious of errors." I would commend this last remark to your careful consideration, while I am sure Tylor's remarkable book will bring nothing but strength to the true principles of religion. "I make no secret that true Christianity seems to me to become more and more exalted, the more we know, and the more we appreciate the treasures of truth hidden in the despised religions of the world."\* Then I am anxious to assure you that the broadest and profoundest investigations of theological truth are welcomed by biblical students. Its defenders shrink not from any new trial of strength, for from the first it has sought no privileges, and claimed no immunities, but boldly confronted and confounded the most powerful antagonists, and is now prepared to challenge the keenest researches of history, science,

and criticism. This truth is Divine truth, and its dimensions equal to the facts of all time and space. Yet, in some of your observations just now, I thought I detected an undertone of suspicion, that Christianity could hardly maintain its imperial claims. It will be well for us to remember that all are not mistakes which are alleged to be so, and we must distinguish between facts and their inferences, for surely we are not bound to yield up our beliefs to anything but solid reasons, and sufficiently attested realities. My doctrine is, and I have seen no reason up to the present time to modify it, that the facts of science and nature, when positively ascertained, will be found in harmony with Scripture when exactly interpreted. What one philosopher or divine declares to be a truth patent to all, another pronounces a palpable fiction. "The eye of human intellect," says Bacon, "is not dry, but receives a suffusion from the will and the affections; so that it may almost be said to engender any science it pleases. For what a man wishes to be true, that he prefers believing." This sagacious observation bears upon all mental pursuits, and shews the necessity of honesty and care. Many in this age are bewildered and injured by hasty conclusions and "dictatorial phrases." The attitude of science and criticism towards the Christian faith is noisy and defiant, and will lead many astray, but let us be charitable and hopeful, and far from thinking of surrendering our cherished beliefs, assure ourselves that ere long the billows that now furiously dash against the Christian rock will have spent their force, and calm and beauty play at its base. Already in the higher circles of inquiry there are indications of a healthy reaction; and science, discarding speculation, is coming forward with facts only and their interpretation. Let this be adhered to, and the assumed strife between theological truths, and the conclusions of physical and psychological researches will cease. Some of our greatest thinkers are vindicating Redi's doctrine that there can be no life, but from life; that the whole universe is not merely dependent on, but



actually is the will of one Supreme Intelligence, who has guided the development of man in a definite direction, and arranged his body and mind for a preconceived purpose. "For my own part I believe the researches of science and history, and of a sound and just criticism, so far from tending to shake the foundations of belief have afforded an infinity of evidence to support it, as well as to sustain the authenticity and to enhance our estimate of the value of its sacred records. If conflict take place between the professors of science and the professors of religion, the fault lies not in the thing they profess, but in those who profess it; it lies in their want of truth to their profession; it lies in their promulgating as science that which is not science; and as religion that which is not religion. It is the rash, the precipitate, the narrow, the half-informed dealing with the subject—this rushing from narrow premises to broad conclusions—to say nothing of the painful causes which mix themselves with human action—that creates these false assumptions, that rends assunder those whom God has joined together, and aims at bringing about this fearful crisis, that a man must be in the desperate alternative either to break with the whole investigation of nature—with all the rich materials not of enjoyment only, but of improvement, with which God has filled our life so full—either he must do that, or if he is not to make that great renunciation, he is to make one greater still—the renunciation of his belief and hope in the world which is unseen, and in that future which is the end and the goal of his earthly existence. I believe that a more vast and terrible imposture never threatened the happiness of mankind, and the way to encounter this imposture is by the serious and practical maintenance of the truth by which it is to be detected and exploded, and by which proof will be afforded of the great virtues of religion, and the close union between all the faculties of man and the purposes of the life he now leads, and of the life to come."\*

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\* W. E. Gladstone, at King's College, London, May, 1872.

ALIIQUIS. All are agreed on one subject that, whatever may be his genesis and pedigree, man's existence on the earth is an august and solemn reality. Nothing is easier than to be wordy and discursive on his dignity and achievements. His greatness, and the variety and magnitude of his productions, forcing themselves upon our notice, extort admiration and applause. He is everywhere recognized as possessing powers of perception and high reasoning, an unfettered will, a glorious imagination, and a capacious memory. He discovers moral and spiritual affinities, can dwell with the invisible, anticipate immortality, and is conscious of aspirations that nothing sublunary or finite can satisfy.

NEMO. It is one of the strange charges preferred against Christianity that it makes too much of man,\* that it represents God as more related to him than to nature, that it speaks of creation serving man, and not of his dependence upon it. But in these days of scientific triumph, how loudly would natural philosophers have derided Scripture, had it represented him as inferior to nature, and the slave of its laws. In the zoological scale he may not be so great in bulk and strength and speed as some of the creatures that browse in the field, carol in the grove, or sport in the waters, but he is conscious of impulses, visions, and responsibilities, in which none of these can participate.

For some time now it has been a rooted conviction with me, that the knowledge of human nature is the one solid foundation both for natural and theological science. Especially is a competent acquaintance with the philosophy of the human intellect essential to the teacher and defender of religion. He cannot, like the geometer assume all his principles, and argue merely on the supposition of their truth, but must go back as far as inquiry can go, and concede the possibilities of error in many directions. "Religion subsequent to Revelation supposes a genuine philosophy of mind as the condition

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\* Spinoza.



of its truth."\* Nothing is more obvious than that Christian theology implies the truth of certain metaphysical tenets, and it is as clear that in these days these assumptions of theologians are regarded by many as exploded errors. The only principles, therefore, which deriders of our belief hold in common with ourselves are the fixed principles of human reason, and if we cannot refute their doctrines on the implication of these principles, we cannot refute them at all. So that the study of the human mind is to all pre-eminently advantageous, and to the theologian absolutely indispensable. Many of the modern puzzles and difficulties in our discussions have no better foundation than an ignorance of the nature and limits of human reason. When we put away theory, hypothesis, and fancy, from paraded doubt, it is marvellous how meagre and harmless it becomes. This species of unbelief is certainly calculated to damage youthful and unfurnished minds, and also the minds of those older persons, who cannot bear the breath of opposition, but whose spirits collapse at the first question or difficulty, likewise the minds of many who are so engaged with the business of life, as to be debarred a personal painstaking investigation; but it is innocuous on the mind of the disciplined thinker. While fully admitting that apart from human learning and many acquisitions, a man may become fully acquainted with the evidences of the divinity of the gospel, yet a scientific, intellectual, and critical scepticism must be met by weapons of its own kind. We must divest ourselves however of the notion, that scepticism involves superior sagacity or strength of mind, and maintain that the highest intelligence is on the side of an inspired Revelation. One preventive of scepticism in young men will be their studying the laws which regulate their own minds, manifested in their perceptions, intuitions, thoughts, and volitions. For every young man there is a critical period of doubt as he comes first to wrestle with great questions, and to inquire into

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\* Sir W. Hamilton.

the grounds of that which hitherto he has believed on trust. At this period he requires sympathy and guidance. With some doubters, as you well know, it is useless appealing to experiences, and you can only meet them by the equipments of facts and reason. Scepticism may indicate power, but never the highest power either in kind or degree. The highest form of power is in affirmation and construction, while to deny, to object, to find flaws, to destroy anything that can be destroyed, is comparatively easy.

Here I may observe that Christian and saving faith includes two elements,—belief and trust. Belief must precede trust, since we cannot confide in a person unless we admit his existence and claims. Belief respects facts and relations; trust rests on a person. We believe on the ground of evidence; we trust on the ground of character. Christians as a rule confide on the ground of testamentary evidence, and if they add to it an implicit faith, they enter into rest, “knowing in whom they have believed.” Scepticism cannot destroy, in some cases indeed cannot disturb, the strength of their trust. But it may dim and hamper the belief of opinions and relations, and thus make confidence or trust difficult in the case of those who have not believed with the heart unto salvation. Some aspects of the scepticism of the day aim at trying to the utmost the faith of the most confirmed, since they seek to throw doubt upon all revealed religion, and launch the human mind upon the vast and trackless ocean of uncertainty without chart, or compass, guide or destination. This rationalistic speculation produces and encourages the infidelity of the indolent and indifferent, who view Christianity merely as a system of theoretical opinions which men may believe without benefit, and neglect without injury. Hence you will see with me the importance of a knowledge of the evidences in which Christian belief reposes, and especially in the case of youth, that their concrete act of faith may become *impregnable* by their belief resting on intellectual



convictions, as well as being rooted in their affections. From these observations you will notice there is a large field of religious truth which does not immediately involve truth in a person. In this field questions arise that are for the intellect solely, and yet that may be so decided that faith in God, or in the Gospel shall be impossible. Such, for instance, as the questions of the being of a personal Deity, of human responsibility to Him, and of a future state. It is here where such surmisings arise as nourish the rationalistic scepticism of our age, which consists in a disbelief of those essential truths without which religious trust cannot be exercised. A man may so reject or ignore truth as to render himself unable to trust in God, or in the Gospel, or in a sense of responsibility, or in existence after death. The inquiry then, is here suggested, is there within the reach of man evidence which ought to convince him of the reality of Divine truth? We hesitate not to aver that such evidence is at hand, and that our relationship to a personal God may be ascertained, that the truth and necessity of the Gospel may be established, and that human responsibility and destiny may be known. If so, then we discern the moral character of scepticism, and find that before God it is sinful and offensive, for it is that evil thing which the Scriptures designate and brand unbelief. How far evidences of these things can reach heathens and individual cases God only can judge, but when we look to ourselves it is no breach of charity to say, that the religious indifferentism and sceptical doubt of our country, are not for want of instruction and proof to the contrary. I must still remind you that the speculations of an intellectual philosophy which so largely pervade society, and which appear to many so perilous and formidable, are but the old opponents of the Gospel in more modern guise. It is true they are impeding the triumphs of Christian truth, but they present no difficulty which has not already been met and overcome. In these introductory remarks I have been wishful to encourage Christian

candour and earnestness;—earnestness in searching out evidence on all sides of every question, and candour in estimating this evidence, real or alleged, coming to us from philology, science, history, or criticism. If we fail not to discriminate between axioms and inductions, and become ourselves examples of Christian life and power, we have nothing to fear from the researches and objections of modern scepticism, albeit, protean in form, for though it has strength among us, there is something stronger.

QUIVIS. I acknowledge these observations of yours are re-assuring. My friend here, when reporting your previous conversations, surprised me by your positive declarations of the truth of Christianity, and of its harmony with the inductions of sound philosophy, and ascertained history. We are accustomed now-a-days to a different order of speech. Men speak of God and of the Gospel, and of the human spirit, and of immortality falteringly, and with sceptical faintness, or inuendoes. All things are attributed, as far as language can be understood, to developments, to a blind series of contrivances, to insensible and unknowing forces. Religion we are told "consists of love, complete submission to an exalted and mysterious superior, a strong sense of dependence, fear, reverence, gratitude, hope for the future, and perhaps other elements."\* The Bible is referred to as a legendary book, "a petty sanctuary of borrowed beliefs." This fleeting and perplexed life is everything; vice and virtue are mere matters of convenience and taste; grief is to be assuaged by forgetfulness; and the grave becomes the melancholy refuge and tomb of being. Any reverent mention of God, or a warm recognition of His goodness, of dependence upon Him, or of man's moral responsibility to Him, is met either with expressions of contempt, or with a silence that betrays unbelief. And too much of this is found among salaried teachers and professors of the Christian religion. Judging from what I hear

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\* Darwin's "Descent of Man." Vol. I., p. 68.



from the chair of professors, and from the admissions and evasions of men who minister at the altars of our churches, a great exodus would speedily take place from Christian schools and sanctuaries, if social and other inducements to continue were withdrawn. What some can have to do with teaching the Bible, is to me marvellous, and their reticence of opinion, and concealment of the chasms which exist between them and the creeds to which they have subscribed, indicate cowardice or something worse.

NEMO. This is very sad, but I fear too true. You must however remember, that, perhaps here in Oxford, you become acquainted with more than an average amount of unbelief and speculation, and further that the young men with whom you are in daily contact, are the more likely to be influenced by the suspicions cast on vital Christianity from the supposed results of science and civilization. This is my greatest fear, since I cannot hide from myself the conviction, that the materialistic philosophy of our age threatens to poison the belief of the coming generation, and destroy a healthy mode of religious thought and life. No danger is apprehended to vital Christianity itself from the progress of real scientific inquiry, but what is dreaded is that persons, and especially youthful students, who merely see the results, or alleged results of science, as they are presented in popular literature, should be caught in the temptation that Christianity is not so sure and true as was supposed. This notion would inevitably bring with it indifference to spiritual religion, and encourage unbelief in its nature and claims. To provide against this temptation is the burden of my conversations with you. My difficulty is not in the vindication of the Christian religion, but how to deal with the tone and questions arising from what are called the science and criticism of the day. I have counselled, as you know, patience, not fear; faith, not despair. I have found that no century has yet passed which has not tended to

the glory of God, and the wonderful discoveries with which we are now familiar, and the power which man now possesses over nature, notwithstanding false assumptions and conclusions, are steps toward this glorious goal.

You have spoken of my confidence in the divinity and ultimate universal triumph of Christianity. I know not one reason why I should not be thus positive. One ground of confidence is a personal consciousness of salvation. Prayer is not with me, as it has been scornfully described, "only a machine warranted by theologians to make God do what His clients want;" but the spiritual action of the soul turned towards God as its true and adequate object and heaven. I only speak for your encouragement when I say, that I have often verified the Christian theory of prayer by its fruits, and found in this sacred exercise my soul elevated, purified, strengthened. Why should I doubt that there is a God who heareth prayer? Then further, I sustain my position by a knowledge of the nature of science itself. What is it but man collecting facts, and by thought and reflection explaining them? And I find in them nothing to contradict the historical facts of Christianity, or the subjective experience of its grace and power. Facts are facts, whether discovered in the world without, or in the world within. The progress of science has not rendered incredible, or even improbable, anything which is clearly taught in the Word of God. We cannot apply the principles of an experimental science to our relations with a spiritual and infinite God; nor explain the great mystery of life by materialistic hypothesis; but feelings and desires and hopes are well known. Many are now demanding physical proof of things not susceptible of it, and imperiously bidding away the action of affection and of faith, which are necessities of our nature. Thus I see the importance of the true philosophy of man, as the connecting link between science and religion. Then further, I am  
 strengthened in my conviction of the truth of Christianity



by knowing the history and defects of scientific philosophy. If I abandon the Bible as my teacher and guide, where am I to go? Who will give me satisfactory theories of mind or of matter? Where will you send me for trust-worthy expounders of philosophy and of history? In every department of knowledge affecting man, duty, destiny, and God; they so change and quarrel that I am compelled mournfully to inquire, "Who will shew me any good?" The study of man is now the battle-field of keen disputants, and in asking what I am to believe, the writings of Comte, of Herbert Spencer, of Darwin, of Huxley, and of J. S. Mill, so perplex me that I am compelled to seek for something more definite and experimental. Where shall I go? Huxley tells me that "the rocks reveal to us transitional forms between animals now existing, and those long gone, and yield to the philosopher fossils transitional between groups of animals now far apart."\* In his paper on the "physical basis of life," he says; "I take it to be demonstrable that it is utterly impossible to prove that anything whatever may not be the effect of a material and necessary cause." These bold assertions are not supported by a single fact, and the same may be said of Darwin's hypothesis of "Natural Selection." The Bible does not design to teach physical science, but its account of the "origin of species" is more to my mind than the assertions of Darwin, and Wallace, and Huxley. Whatever such writers may affirm of the ignorance and assumptions of theologians, their productions, as far as we have seen them, cannot be charged with such inanities, heresies, and appeals to the imagination for facts. You will agree with me that Christianity contemplates the promotion of the love and glory of God, and the brotherhood of mankind; but the philosophical naturalism of the day aims at the obliteration of the supernatural and the Divine, and the establishment of a community of beings on earth without positive moral laws.

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\* Lecture on "The Horse," Royal Institution, April, 1870.

On Mr. Darwin's hypothesis it is impossible to ascribe to man any other immortality, or any other nature, than that possessed by the brutes. Every barrier of moral obligation is placed at the mercy of the conditions of existence. The sacredness of human life becomes a myth, and submission to God's will incomprehensible. Ponder one of Mr. Darwin's possibilities on his own theory, as given in his own language. "If for instance," he writes, "to take an extreme case, men were reared on precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can scarcely be a doubt that our unmarried females would like the worker bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters, and no one would think of interfering." It is thus plain that morality would lose all elements of stable authority, and men would simply strike a balance of probabilities, and adopt the course which would be the most likely to diminish the aggregate of human and animal misery, and of their own in the foremost place. The "moral sense" of a being deduced from a "primordial form" would only be on the side of passion and apparent interest, and verify Professor Bain's notable theory, that our moral judgments are determined by our hopes and fears. Such teaching as this is an offence against society itself.

Of course these writers will tell you they are not materialists, and that they believe in Divinity, and mind, and duty; "but," says Spencer, in one of his latest utterances, "the proposition that an 'originating mind' is the cause of evolution, is a proposition that can be entertained so long only as no attempt is made to unite in thought its two terms in the alleged relation. But when the attempt to unite them is made, the proposition turns out to be unthinkable." Darwin, in his "Descent of Man," boldly applies his theory of evolution to the faculties of the soul, as well as to the powers of the body. Are not such notions as these materialistic? Huxley says, we know nothing of matter except as a name for the unknown and hypothetical



cause of states of our own consciousness ;" nor of spirit, except that "it is also a name for an unknown and hypothetical cause of states of consciousness. In other words matter and spirit are but names for the imaginary substrata of groups of natural phenomena." Thus then the flower that a girl wears in her hair, and the blood that courses through her veins, and the judgments and aspirations she cherishes, are each and all varieties and results of "protoplasm," a physical substance, for, according to his doctrine, every effect is the result of the action of a material and necessary cause. If this be not materialism, what is it? Then Alexander Bain tells me, that mind is comprised under these three heads—Emotion, Volition, and Intellect; but since I am told afterwards that all these are manufactured by my bodily organization and brain convolutions, why speak of anything beyond matter? We want a definite answer to this inquiry, has there been added to man's bodily organization an incorporeal essence? Is man a distinct and designed existence upon the earth? It is in this inquiry I am wishful for awhile to interest you. Let us now attempt to deal only with facts, and in our "science of human nature," discard speculations and possibilities which, properly speaking, belong to no branch of science, since it has sternly to contemplate the actual, as opposed to the possible and imaginary.

In our estimate of man, therefore, we must guard against two extremes. We must avoid the pernicious modern error of self-exaltation. No vice is so offensive to God as creature-pride, and yet there is none to which human nature is so prone. When man's sinfulness, ignorance, frailty, and dependence, are remembered, nothing seems more unmeaning and ridiculous than arrogance and vanity of intellect. You know, however, that with many, human reason is the measure and law of all knowledge, and that the wisdom of the past is rejected for the idolatry of man's present powers, as if human nature had somehow or other been elevated to a position beyond the range of its earlier strength and importance.

"The fair humanities of old religion," are said to be gone. "Lament it or not, faith has vanished. Whatever may be said of it, science has destroyed it. It is impossible for minds of vigour and good sense, nourished with history, armed with criticism, and studious of natural science—it is impossible for them to believe in antiquated tales, and antiquated Bibles. A morality and a justice are being slowly created on a new basis, not less solid than in the past; nay, more solid, because they will not be mingled with any of the puerile fears of infancy. Let us cease then, men and women alike, as quickly as possible to be children." These are vain words, except only as far as they reflect the present state of materialistic philosophy in some quarters in this country, and especially on the continent. In our own land, indeed, every educated person knows there is a misgiving of the compatibility of science with Christianity, and that the mental attitude of too many is apprehensive and distrustful. A disposition to doubt all things except those which can be weighed and measured, a jealousy of all conclusions which do not admit of verification by the five senses, prevails extensively in England. There is perceptible in the study of nature, a tendency towards a narrow and exact limit in man's mind, and the conclusions to which he may come. The dominant and unphilosophical sense of the universality of law, tends to destroy homage to spiritual things, and a devout recognition of harmony between the Creator and the Creator's works. The scepticism of the age is different from that of Hume, Voltaire, and Paine,—its main peculiarity and source of power arising from its association with physical science, which tempts man to fancy himself a being of august and self-satisfying prerogatives.

There is an opposite error against which we must be admonished. The feeling of shadowyness or self-depression must be avoided, for although humility in man is a befitting emotion, it may degenerate into a childish and false self-disparagement. The doctrine



with many just now is, that science has only to do with phenomena, that is, with material appearances and their relations. Our scientists are trying hard to bring man under the laws of a physical mechanism, and a cerebral physiology, by resolving his capacities and their products into "unconscious cerebration," and vibrating force. He is ranked very low in the present estimates of comparative science, and is in danger of being left out of them altogether. Since he has sprung from the humblest forms of substance, he may ere long be resolved into something quite impalpable! so that we must put in a plea for man's significance in creation, and show that the sciences of nature cannot by any operation of "natural selection," or materialistic process, extinguish him. We will crown him the visible king of science and of nature, and retain him, where Inspiration placed him, on the apex of created beings, to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth."

a. Man's erectness of form and nobility of countenance have often been referred to, and are obvious indications of his superiority to the other tenants of earth. This upright position is a symbol of his designed greatness, and shows that he was born to aspire to great things. "Whether the etymology which the ancients gave of the Greek word *ἄνθρωπος*, man, be true or not (they derived it from *ὁ ἄνω ἄθρων*, he who looks upward): certain it is that what makes man to be man, is that he alone can turn his face to heaven; certain it is that he alone yearns for something that neither sense nor reason can supply."\* Without man the terrestrial system would have been unfurnished and unmeaning. Before our globe, though moulded into beauty, and tenanted with rejoicing creatures, could be pronounced complete in riches and embellishments, one being more was necessary who could recognize the agency of God, reflect his intellectual and moral glory, and "from thence magnanimous to correspond with Heaven." His body formed from the

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\* Max Müller's "Lectures on the Science of Religion." Lec. I.

dust of the ground, is the most complex and marvellous of structures. It is a mechanism philosophers avow to have no parallel, an organization anatomists affirm to be peerless, and points directly to God. Consisting of elements which are in themselves insensate matter, it acquires, like iron under magnetic influence, a peculiar sensitiveness and vivacity, so much so that some confound the body with the mind itself, albeit the gulph is wide enough for any to see who use their eyes aright. As the kernel determines the form of the husk, may not the finely constructed brain result from mental processes, rather than they from exquisite cerebral tissues? Mark how ready the members and organs of the body are to fulfil the offices for which they were designed, and their apt obedience to the summons of the will. What marvels attach to the human hand. What so fine in its touch, and yet so imposing in some of its productions. Then the tongue so gifted with the capabilities of articulate language, and the ear so susceptible of sound, and the eye so exquisite and far-reaching in vision. We look in vain for anything comparable to man in the animal tribes, for truly he appears not so much on earth as above it.

*b.* Man's dignity is revealed in his endowments. I pray you remember that the real distinctions between the human family and the brute kingdom are not differences of degree, but differences of kind. The human biped is not a man because, like some animals, he is two-footed, and, like all others, owns organs and brains, but because he possesses a reasoning, progressive soul, which is so broad a demarcation between him and them, as to constrain us to provide for him a distinct position in the animal scale. By his possession of a thinking, self-knowing, self-regulating, and aspiring soul, he is raised from a mere material and sensitive being, into one that is intellectual, spiritual, responsible, immortal. To man you necessarily attach thought, which busies itself not only with complex and visible phenomena, but also with unseen relations; to him likewise belongs the power of remembrance,—of distinct, distributive, permanent re-



membrance; preserving the fruit of thought, and the records of experience; re-producing them to warn and guide, to gladden and inspire, thus widening existence, and quickening it into a higher life. The self-reproaching or self-approving power of conscience, likewise, attaches to the human being; a morally perceptive power, pleading for righteousness, and determining character according to its relations to it; an executive power, proclaiming guilt or innocence; a counselling power, apprizing of the approaches and the consequences of wrong doing, or prompting the steps of rectitude, and bracing the heart with virtuous rigour; finally a prophetic power, pointing to the future, and heralding the awards of the judgment day. The starry heavens and the human conscience so impressed the metaphysical Kant, that he regarded them as supplying the highest illustrations of sublimity in creation. How clearly does this solemn prerogative in man point to his relation to an unseen Sovereign. It is childish to tell us that the conscience is manufactured, that it is a product of education and local association, that progress in civilization is not one of internal power, but of external advantage. It is the most original, the most ineradicable and universal of man's attributes. I might also speak at length of the affluence and strength of human affections. We are frequently called to admire the attachments of brute beings, and notably their tenderness for their young, but this love of theirs soon dies out, while human affections are of untold depth and perpetuity. Where are the monuments which the rangers of pasture and forest, of air and ocean, leave behind as proofs of their affection for departed friends? Inherent freedom also belongs to man, he is not a passive creature of outward forces, nor of inward mechanics; instead of bowing to material coercions, he can resist and control them. The human intellect uses audible and legible signs to express its thoughts, and is instinct with religious aptitudes. It is true that birds and beasts express delicate shades of emotion and intelligence by modulated sounds; yet to

utter sounds is not necessarily an act of reason, but to marshal these sounds by synthesis and syntax, and to infuse into them niceties of meaning, plainly is the work of reason, and this is the matchless capability of man. He must be pronounced human,—that is, hyper-animal—since he has been endowed with something additional to his organization, which uses at pleasure any part of it,—its brains or its feet. He is conscious of spiritual aspirations, also of moral obligations, and feels the glow of immortality warming him into a sublimer life. The divergences between man and the highest animated creatures of earth are palpable, irreconcilable, and numberless.

c. The luxuriant, refined, and abiding enjoyments of man discover his dignity. The agency of an acute and intelligent principle in him, extracts from the senses a nobler pleasure than any enjoyment yielded by the mere sensations of animal life. The whole physical composition of man is suffused with the grace and intelligence of the soul. Emotions and sensations generate bodily movements, which, as a rule, are in proportion to their vehemence; but the consciousness of these feelings and movements belongs to something higher than the nervous system. The immediate antecedent of a sensation may be a state of body, but the sensation itself is a state of mind. How does the excitement of certain nerves produce a state of feeling? Thought, or memory, or hope, must be in something additional to the body. Even feeling must have a seat of consciousness, for in the brute creature we concede the possession of a principle called instinct or animal mind. Then for feelings that are reverential, moral, accountable, and intellectually lofty, you must have a finer and higher kind of essence, and these are inherent in man, and place him immeasurably ahead of the most sagacious brute beings. The physical philosopher and the mental philosopher must be united in an examination of man; but when the former has claimed all that goes to him there will be left notable unappropriated



properties and manifestations for the latter. What is it that gathers muscular agitations into a refining and analyzing capacity; eliciting from them exuberant joy, or forming them into compactest strength? Muscular excitements and nervous energy are, in one sense, only material movements and irritations; in another sense they are however mental states, glowing with intelligence, and working for a purpose. What is it that enables man to appreciate truth, to love purity, to commune with Deity, to realize spiritual delights? You and I may fairly and strongly ask the materialist, and the development theorist, what is this but something additional and superior to matter? On the animal side of his nature man tastes, like irrational natures, the pleasures of sense and material things; but by his internal faculties he possesses inward dignity, and enjoys the felicities of the intellectual and spiritual. Hence man owns a spirit as well as a body.

*d.* His dignity is discovered in the duties imposed upon him. There is greatness of being in the ability to discern and perform duty. Man's reason, conscience, knowledge of God, capacity of improvement, and instinct of immortality, were intended to exalt him to companionship with Deity. He understands law, and consciously obeys or transgresses it. Hence self-government is exacted of him. Notwithstanding the infirmities and seductive appetites of his inferior nature, he has the defence of self-respect, and can lay hold of help to build up a pure and noble character. Looking to God for grace and strength, he can quell imperious appetite, and resist temptation. Whatever may be the mental endowment—if we may so term it—of brute natures, it is stationary, and bequeaths no conquests; but man collecting his ideas and hoarding his information for future use, acquires enlargement of being, and leaves behind him advancing triumphs. Beyond all other indications of eminence on earth, man can know, love, serve, and enjoy God. This is the glory of his nature, and the certain path to exaltation. Scripture says, speaking of him, "I

will set him on high because he hath known My name." Spiritual obligation and conscious dignity are inseparable. Absorbed in the pursuit of sensitive pleasure, intent on the acquisition of wealth, captivated by sublunary glitter, man too rarely deems himself God's peculiar property; although he is designed "for a habitation of God through the Spirit," and may become through "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" the home of Deity. Strangely forgetting that he may entertain and even glorify God by opening to Him the sanctuary of his soul, he holds himself free to love and serve base divinities. No marvel that such a one is overborne by sin, mastered by the evil One, and degraded by wrong-doing. Denying his responsibility to his Maker, by assuming that the phenomena of the universe are the result of a "progression" from blind force to "conscious intellect and will," and that his spirit is only a part of his living organism, and that he has been evolved from a few grand titles of generalized force and relations; what motive has he to self-denial, what inducement to the practice of self-righteousness, what resources for self-government? Man's nature is strangely contradicted and confused by the modern theories which profess to evolve him from something or nothing, and then ask him to feast his nature at the shrine of some worshipful unknowable! Surely I am not wrong in this language, for John Stewart Mill, though he claims, by eminence, to be the philosopher of things, acknowledges, "I do not profess to account for the belief in mind," and defines matter as a "permanent possibility of sensations," these confusing confessions are only equalled by another of his deliverances on the nature of mind and matter, when he says explicitly, "the possibilities are conceived as standing to the actual sensations in the relation of a cause to its effects."\* In a following chapter Mill actually defines mind as a "series of feelings, with a back-ground of possibilities of feeling;" he contends for the legitimacy of psychological observation, and the necessity of a

\* "Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," Chap. XI & XII.



correct theory of the soul, but in all his writings I can find no satisfactory theory of the mind nor of matter, nor the reasons of his axioms of induction, and this arises from his defective and uncertain science of man. I speak it thoughtfully to you more youthful inquirers, the defects of Mr. Mill's philosophical writings will become, ere long, under the sceptre of a genuine philosophy, obvious and glaring. I do not forget, what you are well aware of, that Christian divines and apologists are often twitted for their ignorance of science, and grave lectures are read them on their improprieties in meddling with philosophical subjects; but for them we may plead one thing, that, without august pretensions, they know what they are writing about, and leave none of their readers in mystifying labyrinths.

*e.* Man's dignity is declared in his responsibilities. The knowledge of his relations to God, and to his fellow creatures, combined with a consciousness of privileges, impose upon him serious accountabilities. The lower animals, and idiots are irresponsible, the one from the absence of moral faculties, and the other from their imperfect physical development. Lying at the basis of society, the idea of accountability is the bond of its order and happiness. Whatever may be affirmed by the fatalist and the theorist, all who enjoy the light of reason are inwardly alive to freedom, obligation, veracity, law, and justice. With the knowledge of good and evil, the consciousness of transgression, and the apprehension of retribution,—what human being can plead ignorance of them? They are spontaneous deliverances of his nature, and too deep in his conscience and heart to be removed by sophisms. Disputed and denied they have been, yet in the hour of reflection, and in the presence of death, they have risen into immovable realities before the stoutest caviller.

*f.* Then how man's dignity is proclaimed in his destiny. Instead of being the product of some progression from the inorganic to the organic, of some "primordial form" fighting its way to the dignity of an

anthropoid ape,—dumb, brutal, mischievous, loathsome,—he is in the essential characteristics of his being separable from nature and all its tribes. His spirit, proceeding directly from God, claims a lofty elevation above all the forms and creatures of the earth. All the other living creatures are described as coming from the earth, but in man's formation his body only is from the earth, while his soul is imparted immediately from God. This, surely, marks the bestowment of a special gift to man, and two essentially different natures in the constitution of his being. The interjection of the external air, and the action of the lungs, cannot be regarded as the origin of his soul, or living person, as the original may be rendered. We cannot suppose that Deity is so human as to breathe the air, or that literally He infused it into the body of Adam.\* The body of dust became animated and erect by the communication of an intelligent living principle; and the union of the two-constituted man. Other passages of Holy Scripture abundantly prove this. The word employed by the sacred writers both in the Hebrew Scriptures and Greek Testament to describe the ethical and religious power in man, means *one* or *simple*, indicating that it is a subsistence altogether distinct from the body in essence. There is nothing to prevent our belief in his real identity in another life as a moral and intellectual being, although under conditions of existence dissimilar to those of the physical constitution of his earthly state. He carries with him an ineradicable conviction of immortality, and it is this prospective future, this bending of the soul towards the end and issue of things, which invests his earthly life with inexpressible significance. "Aptitude," says Paley, "implies design;" and if man be a creature appointed to perish in this world; why has he been invested with capacities that carry him so immeasurably beyond its boundaries, its resources, and the hours of sojourn on its surface? Why does he possess such a degree of intellectual ability as enables him to discourse on a

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\* "The breath of lives." *Chayim*—plural.



future state, if in relation to him it have no reality? The whole supremacy of conscience is clearly based on the consciousness of inward freedom, and on the conviction that we are accountable creatures, observed by an ever-present Sovereign, whose power can no more be eluded than His notice. May not the grateful whisperings, or disturbing murmurs of conscience, be interpreted as the distant but certain sound of that trumpet which, in blasts of thunder, will ere long summon the human race to the bar of the Eternal? If man be no better than the brutes which serve him, and no higher destiny await him, why is he possessed of a nature, not animal merely, but spiritual; not passive merely, but active; and its activity not instinctive merely, but intelligent and voluntary? His aspiring and religious capacities clearly witness to the existence of God and a life to come, since they carry him above the visible to the invisible, and fasten him to spiritual laws and duties.

Shunning, therefore, the extremes of man's absolute grandeur, hopeless degradation, or physical evanescence, I would ask you to ponder this summary of the endowments of his varied and majestic nature. This is man as you and I know him. This is man as Christianity reveals him. We may place him on the throne of nature without denying or forgetting his infirmities, his ignorance, his depravity, or his peril. You will agree with me that it is offensive to witness the treatment his nature is now-a-days receiving at the hands of a speculative and atheistic philosophy. The nobility of his form, and his magnificent attributes are ascribed to force, to chance, to continuity, or to anything, rather than his reception of them from the supernatural and Divine. By the doctrine of the inherent powers of matter, of gradual evolvments of being, or of connected chains of organic life, men are endeavouring, not only to affirm a contradiction of Revelation, but a denial of any action of Creative mind. Nature's law is everything with some philosophers;—their light, their force, their cause of all. But who started and directed nature's

laws? If we approach the ultimate truths of phenomena and life, we must come into the presence of a Power additional to and above nature. We may admit the reign of law in creation, without involving ourselves in materialistic fatalism. It may be stated strongly that man cannot believe either himself, or the universe, to be exclusively matter,—“one substance with two sets of properties;” and they who adopt the notion that the human soul is nothing more than an oxidation of particles, or a cerebral offspring, must surely, by the strong convictions and spiritual movements and cravings of their own spirits, be occasionally startled and impressed with the hollowness of their creed.



## II.

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ALIQUIS. It will be of service to look at the Scriptural account of the origin and nature of man. This account is challenged we all know, but it will be well for us to be acquainted with it. And further, we have a right, I judge, to ask the question ; "What saith the Scripture?" On this subject it has certainly established itself as an authority. In truth it proposes the inquiry,—“What is man?” and it furnishes the answer by declaring him to be “the image and glory of God.” In the Holy Volume man is represented as great above all creature greatness, as “made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour,” all things terrestrial being put under his feet, and by him God is waging war with His adversaries, and restoring the shaken balance of His moral government. Inspiration never calls him “beast,” for although insignificant in his flesh, and lowly in his origin, he becomes majestic in power, and is Deity’s vicegerent on earth, and in law and mercy His ambassador. These are plain statements of Holy Writ. Can they be sustained?

NEMO. Man is in reality the marvel of marvels. If believers in Revelation, we must make a great account of him. His nature has been assumed by Divinity, for God was manifest in his flesh, and He has borne that nature to the throne of the universe. What-

ever his debasements and saddening works of iniquity, we do not find on our globe any creature on a par with him. Indisputably he is the highest being of which we have any direct cognizance, and is the monopolist of religion. In appealing to the Holy Volume on the subject before us, it should be noted that some protest against this course, affirming that the investigation of the nature of man is a purely philosophical inquiry, with which the Scriptures have nothing to do. But with you, I trow, consideration is due to the established position of the Bible. Its historical prestige entitles it to a hearing, and it has vindicated its claim to be honoured as truth, until proved to be error. Some attempts have been made also to find materialism in the inspired pages, alleging that if at all, it but faintly, witnesses to man's possession of a principle or endowment dissimilar to his body. We concede that Holy Scripture is not a treatise on man's nature, but it every where pre-supposes the spirituality of the human soul, and multitudes of its statements would otherwise be unintelligible. Apart, however, from explicit declarations, the spiritual personality of man is implied in its constant appeal to his possession of an intelligent and ethical principle distinct from matter. Throughout its pages man is spoken of as a being who, although clothed in animal form, is essentially and in himself a spirit. In truth it is only as a personal spirit man can be the subject of religion. If you resolve his thoughts, convictions, desires, and fears into mere sensations, and brainular influences, religion in its legitimate sense becomes an absurdity. You remove thereby the foundations of responsibility, of virtue and vice, and the significance of relationship to the invisible and the future. As spirits we are linked to the Living and Omniscient God, as spirits we can pray, and trust, and love, and hope. Our spirits alone hold the capacity for religious worship and service. It would truly be a marvellous discovery to detect that Holy Scripture denied or ignored an incorporeal essence in man. That discovery of itself would be direct proof of the un-



necessary character of a Divine revelation. If there be in man no principle of intelligence, no quenchless flame, separable from the elements of his body; an inspired code of doctrines and precepts is superfluous and unmeaning. But the Bible gives a certain sound on man's nature, as it does likewise on another point, the pre-existent life of the soul. It knows of no creation of souls prior to the creation of bodies. The fanciful doctrine of metempsychosis is not countenanced, for it represents each soul as the immediate work of the Creator. A distinction is drawn between the "fathers of our flesh," and the "Father of spirits." A divine element is attached to man's nature, created and communicated by the immediate power of God. "Behold," He says, "all souls are mine, as the soul of the father so also the soul of the son, is mine." Yet a word more here, we must not, with some of the sages of antiquity, and with others, aver of the soul that it is a spark, or beam of Divinity; or that it is a real and substantive emanation of God. In such statements more than folly is found, for the infinite nature is absolutely incommunicable, and many of its perfections cannot be shadowed by any creature excellency. The soul is made we state in the Divine image, not made Divine. God is a spirit, and the soul is formed an immaterial, intellectual, and immortal existence. In the soul of man therefore the "likeness" of the Divine intelligence, spirituality, and immortality, is found. The moral features of the Divine likeness have been lost,—that is, "the universal rectitude of all the faculties of the soul, by which they stood apt and disposed to their respective offices and operations," yet in natural resemblance to God the soul is not now fashioned in any other image than that of old. The soul of man is a mirror, defaced and broken, but still a mirror in which we see more of the Godhead, than in the starry heavens or the spreading landscape. Creation is eloquent for God; it is, as it were, His public orator, and its discourses are grand and subduing; but the soul is His child, the image of

His mind, the revelation of His infinitude. Abashed and ashamed by its conscious estrangement, it is still the child, retaining undeniable traces of its relationship to the Sovereign of the universe.

The body of man is represented in the sacred page, as a "frame" composed of "dust;" as coming up, and cut down, "like a flower of the field;" as subject to waste, to fever, to dissolution; but ultimately as capable of being "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." Its various members and organs are depicted as instrumental to the holy or unholy agency of the secret and active spirit, which is represented as having dominion over all. "Neither yield ye your members," is the appeal of Inspiration to this inner agent, "as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." To the soul, on the other hand, are attributed oneness, spirituality, varied prerogatives and relations, which carry it solemnly and sublimely beyond the nature and service of its material colleague. It is said to possess the knowledge of "good and evil," and of its Creator's "statutes and judgments." It is summoned to "delight itself in the Lord," to "acquaint itself with Him." It can exercise a faith in things invisible, cherish a hope full of glory, use the power of prayer and adoration, and worship God "in spirit and in truth." It possesses the capacity of rising to the fulness of joy in the presence of Deity, and of brightening in everlasting splendours; or of enduring for ever the consequences of violated law, which in their terror exceed our power to conceive and know. It has been said, "that nothing but the circumstance of breathing made the difference between the animated earth and the living soul. Only that substance which was formed out of the dust of the earth became a living soul, that is, became alive by being made to breathe."\* If there be in man no spirit separating him from the brute creatures, why is the account of his creation so

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\* Dr. Priestley.



dissimilar to the account of theirs? In the narrative of the creation a Hebrew word is used in its application to plants and beasts implying individuality, marking a single specimen of the kind. It is not used in the account of man's creation; surely to teach us that he is more than an individual specimen of a kind, that he is a personal and indivisible being, and belongs to a higher order of existence. All the other living creatures are described as coming from the earth; but in man's formation his body only is from the earth; while his soul is imparted immediately from God. Does not this mark the bestowment of a special gift to man?

The dualism of man is distinctly taught in the Divine Message to us; "Saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the Heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within Him." "His flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." Solomon distinguishes the dust which at death must return to the earth as it was, from the spirit that shall return unto God who gave it. So our Lord separates the true life of man from the body by such language as this; "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." What words can more clearly set forth the distinction between matter and mind, a physical and immaterial nature, than the following? "They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Thus the somatic and the spiritual natures in man are shewn to be distinct, and each complete in itself.

QUIVIS. But are there not some scriptures that describe man as consisting of three essentially distinct elements? Is not the Word of God described as piercing even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit? Then St. Paul prays that the spirit, and soul, and body of the Thessalonian Christians, assuming apparently, that each part subsists in its perfect integrity, may be

preserved blameless unto our Lord's coming. Such language appears to represent each man as possessed of two souls, one the seat of reason, and one of sensation, perception, and memory

NEMO. I can recommend on this subject an instructive book, "Delitzsch's System of Biblical Psychology." This writer shews that the theory of a third nature in man has no Biblical warrant. The "I" which reasons, and wills, and adores, is identical with the "I" which experiences sensations and passions. We may speak of the higher and lower departments and functions of the spirit, without dividing its essence and unity. Spirit may refer to self-consciousness, and self-determination; and soul to imagination, and appetite, and that which experiences the impressions of the senses. There are many reasons to be alleged against an essential distinction between the soul and spirit in man, but in the way Holy Scriptures separates them, there is nothing misleading nor erroneous.

ALIQUIS. Do not some men of the first eminence in physiology regard life as an inherent quality of organized substances, and its identity or correlation with known chemical and physical forces? It is spoken of as an entity distinct from organization, and not a mere property, resulting from organization?

NEMO. On this profound question of "Life," we must move slowly. So enormous is the area, and so various and intricate the questions involved, that a definition of life, pure and simple, cannot be obtained. It is great in absolute unity, and great in complicated diversity. We must not rush too eagerly into its sanctuary, or it will escape. It is a timid, fluttering, blushing spirit, and must not be approached probably by mortal man. To suppose that organization, meaning thereby the possession of distinctive organs, is essential to life, is simply to ignore scientific facts, for as is well known, the lowliest Protozoa perform all the functions of life without a single differentiated organ.



On this inquiry as it bears upon man's being I would remark, that I have looked upon life in him as the inscrutable bond of union between the living soul and the corporeal frame. It commences with this alliance, and is extinguished at its rupture. The body has no power to release itself from its spiritual associate; but the mind by its own awful act, can dissolve the union, and throw itself into the world of spirits,—it can take away the life of the body, but cannot destroy its own. We read in the sacred narrative, that the body of dust became animated and erect by the communication of an intelligent living principle. I venture to think this is the Scriptural idea of life in man, namely, the bond of union between the soul and body. Two passages may be cited to show you my meaning; it is recorded of Rachel, the wife of the Patriarch Jacob, that as "her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni." Then St. James compares faith without works to that separation between the body and the spirit, which implies the death of the body. Is not this also the popular idea of death, the separation of consciousness and speech from the physical organism? That man you say is dead; why? because his personality or consciousness has departed. The materialist's "spirit of vitality" is nowhere to be found as a distinct force or power, for modern science has merged its alleged functions, whether of organization, maintenance, or reproduction, into those material forces which act on the inorganic matter of the world around us. It is well known that a philosophical physiologist of immense research has been working persistently for years with the hope of obtaining a key to the mystery of life.\* One conclusion he has definitely and fixedly reached; that matter living and matter dead, are absolutely and always dissimilar. The evidence he brings in proof of his position is of the clearest kind, shewing that there is not even a gradient leading from the one to the other, but the line between them is distinct and

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\* Dr. Lionel S. Beale's, "Life Theories and Religious Thought."

abrupt. It is generally conceded in our day that life is an inalienable property of organization, originally impressed upon it by its Maker. The mere Chemico-Physical theory of vitality is glaringly insufficient to meet the just claims of the human mind. Mere physical law is utterly incapable of producing, or even of explaining, vital action. We may boldly affirm this doctrine, and maintain that there are phenomena behind and above all the powers of organic properties, which nothing merely material will explain. It is true that wherever life is found in any of its forms, it is associated with a peculiar gelatinous compound, with definite chemical components. This has been called "protoplasm," or more correctly "bioplasm," (living matter) and it is this which Huxley designates the "physical basis of life." Subject this living "bioplasm" to analysis, and you obtain chemical elements in certain definite proportions; but the act of analysis destroys the life, and you have only caught its proximate principles, demonstrating that the living power lies defiantly beyond you. That unique property of organization which we call life, remains outside the pale of mere chemical and physical laws. It is not the offspring of "protoplasm," but something which has been super-induced upon it, and may be separated from it. The immediate penetralium in which the mystery of life is concealed may never be entered. It is a property peculiar to organization, the gift of God, which He holds from human gaze, and which is absolutely inscrutable by the most subtle refinements of chemistry and physics, although its characteristics may be designated,—individualization, nutrition, and growth. Professor Huxley will not now, perhaps, affirm of "protoplasm" what he so extravagantly asserted a few years ago in his lecture "on the Physical Basis of Life." These words are there found; "protoplasm simple or nucleated, is the formal basis of all life." Again, "traced back to its earliest state, the nettle arises as the man does, in a particle of nucleated protoplasm." No, never, believe me, can you produce a living, conscious,



volitional, thinking being from the chemistry and physics of the laboratory. In reference to man's origin, both Mr. Darwin and Mr. Huxley in more senses than one have drawn heavily on the scientific tolerance of their age.

QUIVIS. I clearly understand you then to believe, that man's nature, as it came from the hands of God, was a distinct creation. It was a direct origination of a separate species of beings, with endowments, tendencies, obligations, and destinies, markedly different from all other living creatures. You believe in man's descent from God, and not in his development from some common mass of materiality. Adam became the fountain-head of a new and super-sensuous race of beings.

NEMO. That is my belief. Man is hyper-animal, a creature *sui generis*, and in Sir Charles Bell's words, beyond "the uniform course of nature." Every soul of man is an immediate work of the Creator, which He infuses into the animal body prepared for it. It is thought to be more devout and intelligent to assume that God formed a common stock of living organism, and from this evolved the minds and bodies of men, and that after having set the world in motion, He retired into sublime inactivity, never again to be interested in His creations, and beyond the reach of their cries and need. But this I cannot see. The constancy and invariability of the Creator's plan are strongly insisted upon, and severe words are uttered against theologians who deem Him approachable, and still free to act in His own works. But this doctrine of pre-determined uniformities of action of the Governing Power, is only a portion of our knowledge of the Creator, and while literally and perhaps ceaselessly applicable to some of His creatures, may not be as fixedly applicable to others. "The knowledge and agency of the Divine Being pervade every portion of the universe, producing all action and passion, all permanence and change. The laws of nature are the laws which He in His wisdom

prescribes to His acts. His natural presence is the natural condition of any course of events; His natural agency the only origin of any efficient force.\* If these affirmations of a theologian be true, and who can disprove them? then as the first and efficient cause, God is the Author both of the human body and soul. If the soul of man, therefore, be received immediately by creation, it must be from Him; if it be propagated, it must be by His concurring power. As in the Mosaic account we read that the body of man was of God's power, while the soul was from Himself, so I cannot but believe that God creates each soul at the moment when the body, which is prepared for it, enters really and properly on its inheritance of life. You cannot square and limit the action of Deity, but allowing His existence at all, His immediate agency must be in every appearance and event.

No one in his senses disputes that man has much in common with the inferior animals. Not a living being exists which does not own "bioplasm," and whose structure and actions do not depend upon it. We may also discover in their attachment to us, in their fidelity, in their tenderness, and in the true delicacy of the attention which they evince, much that resembles the mental side of man's nature. I believe in a chain of being, or, if the phrase is allowable, in species of mind. Between man and the lowest existences there are points of resemblance, while we claim attributes peculiar to humanity. We must concede mind to many of the animals around us; for, to call their perceptions, volitions, and recollections instinct, or "an internal revelation from Heaven," is only to confuse ourselves and multiply difficulties. For one I cannot conceive how any mechanism can produce animal volition, memory, and docility, any more than it can produce the same phenomena in the human race.

Instinct, or unconscious mind, unquestionably attaches to man, though in a lower degree than it does to animals,

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\* Whewell.



his scantier measure of it being compensated by his superiority in other possessions. In some degree the higher brutes possess reason. To talk of an elephant, a horse, or a dog, doing by instinct the things it has been taught, is as absurd as to say a child learns to read and write by instinct. If this term then mean a species of mind, or soul, I accept it as an appropriate definition of the permanent subject from which the mental acts of animals emanate; if it be understood to signify something else than a species of mind, I should reject it as an unmeaning term. "Our poor relations" I would honour with all that reason and fact can claim for them, yet they do not possess the full human mind with its power to analyse physical and intellectual phenomena; with its religious consciousness, its exalting aspirations, its endless life. Allowing fully for the various physical and circumstantial disadvantages of our dumb companions, yet the most sagacious of them can only be said to possess the glimmerings of mind, its humblest bestowment, its faintest manifestation. Man owns a personal existence in creation, while animals live in races or tribes, and are distinctly dependent upon outward circumstances; the body acting upon their mind by means of impulses and associations, if not habit. The nature of the brute creature, its sagacity being more natural than rational; its movements uniform and restricted, rather than progressive; all its actions instinctive and imitative, rather than spontaneous and original, clearly separates it from the species man. Some of the most liberally endowed of the dumb brutes have been carefully trained, but they have remained to the end drivelling and stolid, though more obedient, apt, and serviceable than some of their fellows. A narrow range of faculties, and absence of veneration to prompt the recognition of an Invisible Supreme, a destitution of hope to carry them beyond the grave, a want of independence, modesty, and creative or imaginative power, indicate their relation to earth, and demonstrate their inferiority to man. I am quite wishful to examine the

border ground between mind and body, and would allow the lower animals perfect souls, rather than give up my own, but see no reason to do this, although it has lately been with considerable positiveness asserted, that the "mental faculties of the dog for instance, include all the fundamental machinery of the human intellect."\* Their subserviency to man, their felt subordination to him, and his dominion over them, reveal the inconsistency of supposing them to possess a mind analagous to his. The affectionate loyalty of a dog to its master may rebuke many a man's heartlessness towards his Creator, but, as we have before remarked, the religion of men includes knowledge as well as feeling. But where in the lower animals is there found the sense of obligation to an invisible power? You may make much, and properly, of the honest and self-sacrificing devotion of the horse which falls down dead from exhaustion, after putting forth his utmost power at the behest of his rider; and of the dog who follows his master to his grave, and cannot be tempted by any inducements to leave it. Such apparent notions of duty do strongly chide the ingratitude, the indolence, and fiendish barbarities of man. But where is the animal's self-consciousness, his self-retrospection, his moral free-agency, his conscience, his sense of allegiance to a Higher Existence? We have no proof that reason guides the inferior races in perception, or reduces ideal relations, or determines their choice. Have they the capacity of self-improvement or self-elevation? You have read Virgil's comparison of the activities and skill manifested in the building of Carthage to the work of bees. The Poet's description of the bees remains correct to this day; but how altered the skill, the handicraft, the achievements of man! The animal mind is stationary, but the human mind is gloriously progressive. As far as we can discover, the universe to them is nothing but an object of sensations; it yields them no ideas; its symbols are uninterpreted, and its revelations a wide blank. The spacious heavens, the

\* Quarterly Review, No. 266. Art.; "The consciousness of Dogs."



waving forests, gleaming and bounding streams, bright flowers, and the mighty ocean; transfer to them no impression of the Creator, excite no emotions of gratitude, and prompt no acts of homage.

It is in the mind, and in the moral ends of action, rather than in the brain, or the physical structure and the passions and emotions, that man presents irreconcilable contrasts to the animal tribes. How augustly his capacity for knowing and enjoying God separates him from the beasts of the field, and the dumb favourites of his home. Take the highest form of the ape, and what a marked inferiority this nature presents to the dark and neglected mind even of its heathen captors. The structural differences between man and some of the Simia species may be the subject of dispute; but their religious and intellectual deviations are palpable, and place man, should his brain and limb characteristics fail to do so, in a distinct and unique kingdom. In his lowest and most degraded condition, the Divine summons may be addressed to him with intelligent and elevating results. But how unmeaning the appeal to any of the inferior animals. It is the possession of the spirit that ennobles human nature. Hence in Scripture the word soul is often used to express the whole man, a mode of speaking never applicable to any of the brute creatures. Thus our Lord uses the phrase 'lose his own soul,' as equivalent to a man losing himself, or being cast away. What may be the future of animals, their rewards in another life for unmerited sufferings in this, we will neither affirm nor conjecture; but they give on earth no sign of the hope of reward, nor the fear of punishment, and indicate a gross ignorance of the relation of time to eternity. They cannot commune with God; they have not the dignity of choosing His service, nor the blissful consciousness of consecration to His will and glory. As Bacon remarked long ago, "dogs have a religion, and their gods are their masters," but they are ignorant of the transports of the reverence and love of Deity. "To Newton, and to Newton's dog, the outward creation was

physically the same; to the apprehension of Newton and of Newton's dog, how different!"

The problem of the method of creation is one of the utmost greatness and attractiveness, and the mind of man will be lured on with the hope of its solution. At present we are in the early stage of crude guesses and positive assertions. The chivalrous love of truth and the large-heartedness of some scientists are beyond praise, but even their statements are not always to be accepted as definite and final. Science acknowledges no authority, but rests simply upon evidence, which may be tested. Facts can only be learnt by observation and experiment and not in the realms of fancy, and in the creation of theories. The truths of religion will never be honestly parted from the truths of science. It is indeed true that if some theories concerning the nature and origin of living beings can be maintained, a revolution in religious belief must occur. But my judgment is, that the very foundations of our holy faith would be strengthened by rigid and persevering scientific investigations, if in all our inquiries we could only avoid ungenerous, dictatorial and ambiguous language. Be assured that on the subject before us,—man's nature,—the teachings of science and of religion will blend and elevate each other.

QUIVIS. Man as he appears to you is possessed of life, matter, and mind. You believe also in his separate and immediate creation, in the spiritual nature of his faculties, in his free-agency, and immortality. You have also told us of your faith in a superintending, ever-present personal God. But I need not remind you that all these articles of your creed, each and every one, are disputed by physical and nature-philosophers. There is the doctrine of materialism, demanding answers to occult and difficult questions. There is the Darwinian theory of the origin of species, attempting the overthrow of the received dogma of separate creation, including the human race. There is Pantheism, denying God's independent or personal existence, and man's individuality. Then you have not yet fully disposed of the evolutionary



theory, and of the physical hypothesis of life. Also Mr. Darwin's assumption of "Natural Selection" must be considered. The theory of the conservation of energy; of physiological psychology; and Herbert Spencer's view of the science of man, must likewise be fairly examined. So that while agreeing with your summary of man's specialities and prerogatives, many questions must be answered before their origin and nature can be definitely settled.

NEMO. In these observations of yours I think you have covered what I may call the literature of the subject. I shall be very glad to take up these matters in the order in which you have enunciated them. We shall have necessarily to glance at other matters in addition to man, but we will make him our central figure and subject, to which all I have got to say may converge.

I. The doctrine of materialism, as I understand it, is assigning man's intellectual and moral faculties to material causes. Man's mind is regarded as the peculiar arrangement of physical properties or forces, his thoughts and aspirations,—motions of the humours of the body, and his whole nature a mass of matter. To quote an authority on this doctrine; "In material conditions I find the origin of all religions, all philosophies, all virtues, all opinions, and spiritual conditions and influences; in the same manner that I find the origin of all diseases and of all insanities in material conditions and causes." "It does not recognise in man a spiritual principle, distinct from the material element. Man feels through his nerves; his viscera are the seat of his passions and instincts; thought is produced by his brain; his personality resides in his organism. But this is not all. These various sets of apparatus are the cause of the phenomena just now stated. Feeling is a nervous product; passion, a visceral acid; intellect, a cerebral secretion; the ego, a general property of living matter." This doctrine of materialism varies in the hands of different writers, and is held in unequal relations to Christian theology. The above

extracts present it in its rudest and most repulsive form. The more involved theory, which claims the advocacy among others, of Dr. Priestley, has been thus enunciated: "That man does not consist of two principles so essentially different from each other as matter and spirit, but the whole man is one uniform composition; and that either the material or immaterial part of the universal system is superfluous." This notion is held with some reverence for Biblical truth, in other respects it coincides with the grossest forms of materialism. Another phase of it, which appropriates the sanction of Dr. Massey Good, is the following: "The mind of man is a combination of the most volatile auras, or gases, diffused over the whole body, though traced in more concentrated form in some organs than in others." More recent materialistic writers inform us, that "progression is the great law of the universe, the purpose for which its present arrangement was ordained; and that the object of this progression is the evolvment of mind out of matter." You will now find men affirming on this subject, that mind is one of the properties, or forces inherent in matter, corresponding to gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and so on; the teaching being, that a certain arrangement of the molecules of matter in the brain leads to the production of mind, as a certain arrangement of metals and acids on a voltaic battery leads to that of electricity. "Those modes of the unknowable which we call motion,—heat, light, chemical affinity, are transformable into each other; and are alike transformable into those modes of the unknowable which we distinguish as sensation, emotion, thought; these in their turns being directly or indirectly re-transformable into their original shapes."\* It was stated not long ago at a sectional meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, that "the time had come when the convictions of men of science could be freely stated, and when they dared to assert that there was nothing in man that might not be under-

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\* Herbert Spencer.



stood. Physiologists ought not to admit that there was any hidden vital force, or mysterious entity, in man, which could not be comprehended or explained."

These materialistic utterances may be classed together since they all agree in denying a generic difference between matter and mind. I would not misrepresent the expounders of the speculation I am controverting, but there appears no reason to quote further from their writings. They are united in maintaining that matter is the only existence of which we know anything, and that there is no authority for the division of being into corporeal and spiritual. As a body of writers, we cannot place them abreast, or speak of them in the same terms. Some hold their views in union with Christian graces, and with many of the truths of the Gospel; some are bold and startling in their assertions, which they are far enough from sustaining by any evidence. Some are splendidly eloquent in their descriptions and apotheosis of matter; and not a few are sarcastically severe in their denunciations of the "priesthood" and the "spiritualist." The substance of their protests has been given, for their famous dogma is, that the facts of mind are the functions of certain conditions of organized matter. On the forms, beauties, and sublimities of matter,—*"the plastic and prolific creature of Deity,"*—I am one with them; on its refined and lustrous qualities, as seen in the phenomena of light, electricity, galvanism, and magnetism, they cannot for me be too glowingly descriptive; on the nobility, exquisiteness, and peerless mechanism of the human body, they cannot be too enthusiastic. But when they endow the visible and material with thought and reason; when they assign to one and the same source the palpably different phenomena of feeling and insensibility, of volition and inertia, of intelligence and senselessness, of torpidity and consciousness, of material uniformity and the countless variations of human personality; they introduce endless confusions, as I judge, and contradict not only the common sense of *mankind*, but the conclusions of our most accurate *ratiocination*; they dispute our experience, reject the clearest

facts, and degrade the name and province of truthful science.

I am bound to say we must resolutely maintain that matter alone is insufficient to account for mental and spiritual phenomena. Man in every region reveals the possession of faculties, and is seen to achieve results so incompatible with the known properties or adjuncts of matter, that, instead of harmonizing, the two utterly repel each other. All we definitely know of matter, bears not the least affinity to thought, memory, or consciousness. "Man is fearfully and wonderfully made," but we need not increase the inexplicableness of his being by resigning what is really known, in favour of that which is mere conjecture. Materialism only guesses at his nature, in order to find a shadowy reason for discarding the doctrine of the supernatural constitution of his soul. Prodigious labourers in the field of philosophy have worked hard and long at the mystery of man. The idealists have endeavoured to make matter a product of mind, and subject all to purely philosophical considerations; the realists and naturalists have striven to shew that mind is but a result of the same substance as the body, and its chemico-physical production; and the identicalists, (the same as the former under another name,) declare mind and matter to be attributes of one substance, modes and forms of one being, and would resolve emotion, intellect, and will, into mechanical attractions and repulsions. But how plain that all this is but a clumsy cutting of the knot, instead of a loosing of it? For one I heartily side with the dualists, maintaining the existence, in man's being of a distinct spiritual principle in unravell'd intimacy with his material organization, and firmly believe that the teachings of Holy Scripture in relation to "the hidden man" may be confirmed by logical induction, and the observation of psychological facts. Many jaunty questions, and plausible objections, may be urged against this view of man, but these are, as I think may be shewn, only the dead leaves which the winds of a captious philosophy scatter across our path.



The vaunted plea of the great simplicity of his doctrine, as compared with that which pleads for two distinct and separable essences in man's nature, in no way serves the materialist. He quotes Sir Isaac Newton's maxim, "That we are not to introduce more causes than are sufficient to explain appearances," a valuable principle which I fully accept. It cannot be shewn that the properties and forces of matter are sufficient to account for perception, conscience, remembrance, and hope. When the heart causes the blood to circulate, it is one motion producing another motion; when the stomach converts the food into nourishment, it is the heat, moisture, gastric juice, and gradual compression of its muscular coat, that unite to produce a trituration, solution, and conversion, greater or less, according to the strength of the organ, and the nature of the food; when secretion takes place, the fluid formed is not a new creation, but only a new combination of certain elements pre-existing in the blood, which by a delicate but real play of affinities, are selected and separated by the secreting apparatus. All this is comprehensible, and we clearly understand material causes producing material effects. But we cannot by the same sort of evidence detect mental results from the body. Who can shew that the most opposite phenomena proceed from one source? Who can prove that an effect can be amazingly superior and unlike its cause? It is the worthy pursuit of science to reduce the varied phenomena around us to the fewest possible principles, and to discover unity in diversities, rising on to the great unity of all, the great first Cause. This is a noble mission of philosophy. But it can never be shewn that material combinations originate intelligence. The materialist himself says that he "never asserted that all matter could think, but simply organized matter." This is an important concession. If it could have been shewn that thought and memory were inherent qualities of matter, then an immaterial principle in man would have been demonstrated an unnecessary appendage. But thought or intellect is denied to matter as an innate

property, but it is assumed to belong to it as an effect or result. You know, however, that properties and results are different things, and must be arranged in separate categories. Hence I have always seen that materialism can claim for its foundation, nothing better than an illogical assumption. It concedes that matter in its separate parts is destitute of thought and consciousness, but when these destitute separate parts are brought together in some life-combination, they begin to move and brighten with intelligence. It is a pure assumption. Is it not an acknowledged axiom in philosophy, that no combination of elements can produce a permanently active property, or power, which is essentially different from these elements when uncombined? The union of two substances will indeed in many instances produce a third different in colour, density, and form; and material combinations may evolve new powers dissimilar from anything appearing to reside in the constituent parts when separated. But the products are unconscious, thoughtless, unreasoning properties and things; and no composition of natural atoms can give birth to a new essence, to intelligence, to volition, to self-consciousness. Matter may assume astonishing forms,—may sparkle in new lights, thunder with new forces, captivate by new appearances; solids may start from the union of gases, and substances become fluids; ethereality may be obtained from ponderous bodies, and tissues that the zephyr thrills summoned from grossness. These, and a thousand other results, may be evolved; but none of them is mind. What resemblance is there between reflection and breadth; between memory and electricity; between a spiritual perception and a material scintillation? The axiom of the great philosopher just quoted compels us to give to man, body and separable spirit, honestly to explain the appearances he furnishes for us. This complexity in his nature will educe a truer simplicity than the materialist can ever attain. Since two opposite classes of properties attach to man's being, why not assign to him two opposite natures as their *origin and source*?



ALIQUIS. But are you in a position to demonstrate the impossibility of mind being among the results or accidents of matter? Until we are acquainted with every possible result of every combination of matter in all possible circumstances, we are not philosophically warranted in determining that matter cannot produce thought. Locke admitted that we possibly shall never know whether any material beings think or no, and that there is no absurdity in supposing Divine power to have super-added to matter the faculty of thinking!

NEMO. We are not omnisciently acquainted with every possible result of every combination of matter in all conceivable states; yet it hardly follows from this truth that mind may be in the tombs, in the rays of light, in the particles of a stone! Neither does it follow that every material substance may be anything else than matter or mind, or anything different from what we now imagine it to be. Still since our senses cannot be trusted, say some, nor our knowledge and consciousness depended upon, you may fancy indeed the atmosphere to be wood, fire to be ice, the ocean one huge intelligent personality! Perhaps you say this is reasoning from our ignorance; to which I should demur, and say it is reasoning from our clearest knowledge, our veracious philosophy, our fastest logic. I am conscious of thought, feeling, power, and of individuality; but as to any imagined substance or material form, to which thought, feeling, power, and individuality adhere, and of which they are the products or results, I have neither an acquired knowledge, nor any inward indication of it as fact. Depend upon it, the language of common life is often safer than mere technology and system. Locke's admission or speculation is not chargeable with the extravagance which has been attached to it, if only honestly interpreted. In another part of his fine old book, he writes: "Unthinking particles of matter, however put together, can have nothing thereby added to them, but a mere relation of position, which *it is impossible* should give thought and

knowledge to them." We may imagine a thousand things, but we have now to do with facts. A man "may as well ask, whether God could not have made a house its own tenant, as could He not have endowed matter with the power of thought?"\* The unintelligence of matter is one of the most obvious and fundamental facts of our knowledge; so that it is perhaps more than ridiculous to speculate about the possibility of the Deity's giving to matter a power of sensation and perception, when we know from all we see and learn of the creation, that He has not thought proper so to do. Yet a favourite writer, Dr. John Tyndall, in his "Fragments of Science," says; If we overleap our acquisitions, it is possible to make some use of our "imagination;" albeit not one very safe and "scientific," we judge. One of the radical errors of materialism is, that it regards every phenomenon of the mind as a purely passive result of certain preceding movements, just as the produce of a mill results from the motion of the machinery of which it is composed. But that the mind is entirely passive is contradicted by a thousand proofs to the contrary. Have we not the faculty of originating a train of thought, and pursuing one chain of association in preference to another? Can we not direct our faculties to one object to the exclusion of all others? That the mind is an active as well as a passive being, is proved by the concurrent sense of mankind. Our intellectual powers are not the slavish results of organization, nor can the materialist's molecular groupings, and his molecular motions, account for the mind's freedom and spontaneity. That the physics of the brain, in man's present condition of being, have much to do with his mental manifestations, is readily granted; but that they act in the relation of cause and effect, must be distinctly denied. When we compare together the phenomena of mind and those of matter they appear so different, so contrasted, so completely heterogeneous that we cannot, without absurdity, without

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\* Sir H. Davy.



doing violence to the laws of judgment, believe them to be the results of one and the same efficient cause. "Given the plan of a house with samples of its brick and mortar, to find the name and nationality of the householder, would be child's play in comparison."

Another reason which the materialist assigns for his doctrine, is the difficulty, the "impossibility," of conceiving the nature of the union between two substances so different as spirit and matter. He urges that he cannot tell, or imagine, how mind can act on matter, or matter on mind; how the frame of dust is allied to spirit; how material fuel feeds spiritual fire; how the aspiring and intelligent is associated with the inanimate and senseless. This, I admit with the materialist, is a mystery, but to pronounce the union of diverse natures in man "an impossibility,"\* is unworthy of a philosopher. If he could explain how matter acts on matter, or how matter can think, it might relieve us. But the students of physical science witness alliances and changes every day of which the chain of operation is concealed, and they find their inquiries terminating in some general fact, concerning which no other account can be given than this,—such is the constitution of nature. The action of mind upon matter, or of matter upon mind, carries no more mysteriousness with it, than the influence which matter exerts upon itself. There are many questions which science must hand over to faith; for, between the farthest point to which its deductions lead us, and the beginning or the end, there is a chasm which cannot be bridged over. What is the amount of our knowledge of physical causes and effects? We can only say that effect is linked with cause, and that a change of substance is followed by a certain change of another substance, which in all cases exactly similar, will follow again. But how or why it is so, cannot be explained. What is the proximate cause of gravitation, or of magnetic attraction and repulsion? I might ask the materialist how the peculiar matter of the brain comes to be at all; who or what divided it into

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\* Dr. Priestley

molecules and cells ; who or what impressed upon them the necessity of running into organic forms ? To such inquiries he has no answer. Here science is mute. True philosophy consists in accepting and classifying the facts of creation and being, as they present themselves. Although we cannot explain the mutual relations of body and mind, and thus lay here the subtile processes through which they act upon each other ; the actions of man are such as to compel us to accept the separate realness of these dissimilar parts of his constitution. Man is a body as well as a soul, and materialism itself has done some good service in correcting the exaggerations of a one-sided spiritualism. The advocates of a genuine spiritualism fully concede that body and soul exert a mutual and strong influence upon each other, and that the thinking principle is very dependent upon the physics of the brain, receiving by means of this and other organs impressions from without, and operating in return on objects external to itself ; granting this, they must still maintain that it is inherently different from the body, capable of independent changes and actions, and fully conscious of the existence of outward agents, whose disturbing influences it can modify, or whose ministry it can welcome and employ. The union and inter-action of two entirely distinct elements in man's nature, are not so much facts that cannot be explained, as every-day facts that cannot be disproved. This is man's complex and mysterious nature. He is a testimony to the reality of two worlds. He is the wondrous synthesis of a spiritual and material essence, each acting with, for, upon, or against the other. To affirm this duality, which is grasped in the unity of thought, is to touch the boundary line of our knowledge of him, for the problem of the connection of body and soul is insoluble. What lies beyond, what spirit and matter are in themselves, or how far and deep the spirit of man strikes its roots into his encompassing frame of sense, we know not ; here we must lower our heads, and acknowledge our ignorance, because we are only creatures, and not the Creator.



QUIVIS. There is a position of materialism grounded on a seeming dependence of mind on organization that has always appeared to me very formidable. "The faculty of thinking," says Dr. Priestley, "in general ripens and comes to maturity with the body; it is also observed to decay with it. If the brain be affected, as by a blow on the head, by actual pressure within the skull, by sleep, or by inflammation, the mental faculties are universally affected in proportion. Likewise, as the mind is affected in consequence of the affections of the body and brain, so the body is liable to be reciprocally affected by the affections of the mind, as is evident in the visible effects of all strong passions, hope or fear, love or anger, joy or sorrow, exultation or despair. These are certainly irrefragable arguments that it is properly no other than the same thing that is subject to these affections." I remember a case which strongly illustrates the great dependence of the mind on the matter of the body, if not indeed its oneness with it. It is that of a sailor who fell from the top of a mast on to the deck of his vessel. Being taken up insensible, he was conveyed to the hospital, where he remained in that condition for some time. The surgeon discovered that there was a depression of the skull, which caused it to press on the brain. This was about nine weeks after the accident occurred, and the man was insensible all the time. The bone was raised off the brain, and this being done the patient in a short time rose up in bed, gradually recovered health and strength, assumed his former normal condition, and said he remembered nothing whatever of all that had happened. Here evidently there was pressure on the brain, and while it lasted consciousness was absent, and memory annihilated. As soon, however, as the pressure was removed, memory and consciousness returned. Is not this identifying the human intellect with the brain, and proving that rationality, thought, reflection, and memory, are its functions?

NEMO. Here we reach the popular and plausible *thesis of materialism*. But as we have seen that its

bold proposition, organized matter thinks, was based on mere assumption, so we shall find that this other and more vaunted proposition arises from surface appearance and fallacious reasoning. I have freely acknowledged a very close inter-connection between mind and body, but am peremptorily restrained from allowing the two to be "no other than one and the same thing." You cannot play on a musical instrument until you have got it, nor will the music be good if the instrument be injured or imperfect. In that case you would not blame the performer, but the instrument. Your case illustrates in a striking manner the truth that the mind holds intercourse with the external world, through the medium of the brain and nervous system, and that when these organs are impaired or defective, that intercourse is suspended but it shows nothing more. This sailor had had longer sleep than usual, and in his waking hour appeared to him to have been dreamless, much in the same way that the previous night very frequently appeared to us to have been a blank. If the soul were only material, and the exclusive product of the animal frame it could not escape partaking, *with invariable certainty*, of the conditions of the body, but the influence is not uniform and constant. Every physiologist knows that very considerable portions of the cerebral substance have in various instances been lost by outward injuries, and yet the person has recovered and enjoyed all his faculties. In other instances, portions of the organ have been destroyed by inward suppuration, or displaced, and ultimately absorbed, by the gradual accumulation of water within the ventricles; and yet no corresponding loss of the mental powers has accompanied such disorganization. The records of surgery abound with cases of this description; and though some of them may be inaccurate, and others wholly fabulous, the remainder are sufficiently authenticated to carry conviction of the fact to every unprejudiced understanding. One case of this kind well observed is fatal to the entire hypothesis of the materialist, for if the mind is simply



the function of the brain, must it not follow in *every case* that the loss of any part of its substance would carry away with it an aliquot part of the understanding? If a portion of the stomach be destroyed or removed, can digestion any longer be performed? If the chest is distended with a dropsical collection of water, will not respiration be at first laborious, and in the end totally impracticable. An abscess in a joint will certainly greatly impair its motions. Here we see physical effects with invariable certainty following physical causes. But the soul vindicates its separate nature by oftentimes proclaiming its vigour in the body's feebleness; its active affections in the midst of disease; and, when conscious of the impending wreck of its terrestrial habitation, it rises to the contemplation of another life, and expands to grasp the Infinite. Notwithstanding grave lesions and disorders in the substance of the brain, mind has moved safely along. Of this the case of Dr. Wollaston is illustrative. His death was occasioned by a cerebral tumour, which in all probability existed in the brain from early youth, without perceptibly, to ordinary observers, affecting his intellect. At last it attained to such a size that it encroached upon the cavities of the brain, and produced paralysis of one side of the body. Yet his mind remained clear, and in the last moments of life he was engaged in writing some figures in arithmetical progression in order to convince his friends that although his tongue was mute his intellect was strong. In advanced life, and corporeal prostration, the mental powers may at times have been seriously crippled, but their undoubted realness has been manifested in genuine acts of intelligence, volition, moral perceptions, hopes and fears. The eye may have become dim and lustreless, but the soul has been regaled with splendid visions; the ear may have become deaf to the sounds of earth, but the spirit has been charmed with sweeter voices, and a richer minstrelsy.

But I have perhaps said quite enough upon the *speculations of the materialist*. It does appear to me

that we have more reason for denying the existence of matter, than for denying that of mind, and for that opinion I might claim the support of some of our best and closest reasoners. I can confidently submit the proof of the immateriality of mind to the careful and unprejudiced examination of your own ideas and consciousness, which examination will carry with it the force of an intuitive belief. Men are still inquiring, and will continue so to do, what matter is, but the spirituality of the soul is a fact, a positive fact, certified to us by consciousness, yet as appreciable by observation, and as immediately so, as any fact of our knowledge. Consciousness is the internal knowledge or perception of what affects one's own mind. It is the wakeful and inspecting eye of the soul, and furnishes us with the strongest evidence we can possess. It does not impart information on the occult nature or qualities of the object whose existence it makes known to us; but irresistibly and indisputably affirms our own existence and the existence of that which is not ourselves. Practically, indeed, we do know what spirit is, since we have each one of us a sample of it in ourselves, that in the thinking, feeling, determining subject which we name self. It is this power of consciousness which surveys the motions of the soul, which notes its forms and successive acts. But actions cannot unite themselves; and, therefore, that which makes these distinct and successive acts of consciousness to be the actions of our being, is something distinct from the actions, that which we call mind. It is this mind, our inner self and not memory or consciousness as a faculty, that gives us the assurance of our personality at different times and demonstrates our abiding individual identity. Thought is not something in man's physical constitution; it is not phosphorus, not valvular action in the circulation of the blood; it is consciousness, the mind's largest and most realizing faculty. Whatever it tells me I must receive as true, or stop all reasoning as useless. If false any one of its utterances, it may be false in as



other, but we may hold firmly to its unalterable and unvarying decisions. Now here again man contrasts with the animals. They are not conscious of their own existence, and are incapable of reflection. Their animal soul may be carried forward to the very confines of reason, but it never projects beyond nature, nor reveals any independence of the world of sense. With man, the lower nature which he shares with the animal species is subordinated to the individual, for he knows himself to be not a mere specimen of his kind, but a solitary and indivisible essence belonging to a separate and higher order of existence. Between the thought, feeling, instinct of the brute, and the inner life of man, who is conscious of himself, and can carry himself in thought beyond himself, there is an impassable gulph.

On the real and separable existence of your spirit weigh for a moment the evidences of your own consciousness. Dwell with yourself in nature's silence, and gather up its deliverances, What are they? The first truth that reaches you is the conviction of your own existence. You reason, I move, therefore I live; I think, therefore I live; because I feel, I am. This a fact of unimpeachable certainty. The belief of your own existence is more than "an accessory of the exercise of consciousness,"—it is its direct and immediate avowal. We cannot deny our own existence without contradicting and belying our mental constitution. Then consciousness will certify the existence of a thinking principle in you. You will find at the seat of your being, that you are a person. You will find something which thinks and knows, and which is profoundly aware of its radical separateness from every other person and object. If you are conscious of a thought or desire, you must be conscious of a thinking or desiring power by which it is entertained. Consciousness implies an object of which we are conscious, as a thought, a remembrance, a judgment;—and a subject that is conscious. When this is felt, our inmost being is reached, since we can go no further than reflective thought and conscious will. Another conclusion which

this self-examination will enforce is, that the mind, and that which thinks and wills, is something distinct from the substance and functions of the body. You will find that you cannot entertain the notion that you and your body are one thing, that your organs and brains are yourself. These you can only view as *belonging to you* yet something different from you. We further learn that a distinction exists between the soul, and its thoughts or modes. We discover that the mind is a permanent knowing subject, since we can no more imagine thought without its appropriate source, than motion or figure without a body moving or figured. Experience acquaints us with great dissimilarity in the states of our being, but it fails not to assure us of a definite existence within us which originates thoughts and surveys them, which knows the changes of feeling that come to us, and remembers them. Ideas, and the consciousness of them, are the manifestations of the mind, not the mind itself. How frequently are we aware of effects produced in us by something separate from ourselves. It is one of our firmest intuitive convictions, and one no metaphysical cavils can shake, that in looking around us there is something more than our own ideas and impressions, and that these objective realities are not ourselves. Then finally, consciousness instances your identity of self with self, all through a long life. The entire substance of your organization is in perpetual flux and renewal; but your ego remains intact, and you are to-day what you were years ago, the same thinking, feeling, resolving self. The materials of the body are endlessly divisible, and science teaches us that the atoms of the densest matter, do not actually touch; but you know yourself to be a unit, an uncompounded and indissoluble personality, distinct from all else in the universe. You are conscious of mental identity, yet you know your body changes; does it not follow, therefore, that your mind is not your body? No reasoning could persuade you that you were not ten years ago the very identical being you are to-day. It is true a person may receive a scar in



youth, and the mark remain through life, because the atoms of fresh matter fall into the place and conditions of the old. This is true as regards bodily functions and substance which are material, but this constancy of form cannot account for thought, for memory, for consciousness.

These deductions which an examination of our inner-self gives as facts, claim the support of every man's rational constitution, of which he may be dogmatically certain. If mental philosophy is to be of service, by furnishing definite and bracing lessons, it must be based on the attestations of consciousness; if it cannot claim this foundation, it is a disjointed scheme, a theory without data, an elaboration of confusion. Materialism makes perception a quality of the thing perceived, and converts our knowledge of the properties of matter into some imaginary properties, or developments of the same, or kindred substance. It makes the brain the depository of impressions, and then their interpreter, merging both the book and the reader into one. One of the first laws of reason is, that we must know a thing to be what we know it to be. If we would allow nature to speak,—and abide by her attestations,—the stereotyped logic of our nature,—we should be delivered from many perplexities. Before her freshening breezes, the cobwebs of nihilism and pantheism, of idealism and materialism, would be swept away, and the temple of intellectual science, become stored with costly products, and be made to resound with inviting harmonies. As we have seen, consciousness, as a principle of certitude, embraces both the objective and the subjective in existence. It gives us authoritatively the conviction of self, and also directly certifies that the sensations we experience are from external realities, which are as truly felt to exist as the mind they effect. Except some first principles be taken for granted, there can be neither reason nor reasoning, and intuition is the first link in the chain of our reasoning, which must be admitted if we are ever to

acquire substantial and valuable knowledge. We shall find also that a true and unfettered philosophy harmonizes with the instinctive and irresistible convictions of our nature, in asserting that there has been given to man an immaterial principle,—an intelligent and voluntary spirit—additional to his corporeal organization, and essentially different in essence, endowments, and works, from its substance, properties, or results. We do not despise the labours of the eminent men who have tried to construct a psychological scheme on the basis of physiology, and have laboured to bring into one domain spirit and corporeity, and exhibit the genetic growth of the human mind; but their finest and highest conclusions only teach that the common ground where the physical and mental unite, is the nervous system, which no intelligent spiritualist has ever denied. But having found the nervous system as the common ground of union and interaction, a vast bound is still required to reach the seat and origin of consciousness. "The relation of physics to consciousness being invariable, it follows that given the state of the brain, the corresponding thought or feeling might be inferred; or given the thought or feeling, the corresponding state of the brain might be inferred. But how inferred? It would be at the bottom not a case of logical inference at all, but of empirical association. You may reply that many of the inferences of science are of this character; the inference, for example, that an electric current of a given direction will deflect a magnetic needle in a definite way; but these cases differ in this, that the passage from the current to the needle, if not demonstrable, is thinkable, and we entertain no doubt as to the final mechanical solution of the problem. But the passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought, a definite molecular in the brain occur simultaneously; we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiments of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning, from the one to the other.



They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated, as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem. How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness? The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain intellectually impassable.\* “‘My friends’” said Anquetil, when his approaching end was announced to him by his physician, “you behold a man dying full of life.” On this expression M. Lordat remarks; “It is, indeed, an evidence of the duplicity of the dynamism in the one and the same individual; a proof of the union of two active causes simultaneously created, hitherto inseparable, and the survivor of which is the biographer of the other.”†

ALIQUIS. For one I am surprised to find the Darwinian doctrine of the “Origin of Man,” has taken such a hold both in this country and on the Continent. His books are eagerly read, and somehow appear as if they supplied a place that needed to be occupied. It does seem unaccountable that the creature man you have sketched to us, the man as we know him in his physical even, not to mention his emotional, moral, and intellectual characteristics, should have sprung from a marine creature, hardly like an animal, consisting of a simple, tough, leathery sack, with two small projecting orifices. But here is Mr. Darwin’s own account of “man’s descent.” “By considering the embryological structure of man—the homologies which he presents with the lower animals—the rudiments which he retains—and the reversions to which he is liable, we can partly recall in imagination the former condition of our early

\* “Fragments of Science.” By John Tyndall, LL.D. Third Ed., p. 112.

† “Journal of Psychological Medicine.” January, 1858, p. 11.

progenitors ; and can approximately place them in their proper position in the zoological series. We thus learn that man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in its habits, and an inhabitant of the Old World. This creature, if its whole structure had been examined by a naturalist, would have been classed amongst the *Quadrumanæ*, as surely as would the common and still more ancient progenitor of the Old and New World monkeys. The *Quadrumanæ* and all the higher mammals are probably derived from an ancient marsupial animal, and this through a long line of diversified forms, either from some reptile-like or some amphibian-like creature, and this again from some fish-like animal. In the dim obscurity of the past we can see that the early progenitor of all the *Vertebrata* must have been an aquatic animal, provided with branchiæ, with the two sexes united in the same individual, and with the most important organs of the body (such as the brain and heart) imperfectly developed. This animal seems to have been more like the larvæ of our existing marine *Ascidians* than any other known form."\*

**NEMO. II.** There are some obvious reasons why Mr. Darwin has so many readers. The literary value of his works is beyond dispute, and while their scientific accuracy in many things is questionable, their style is fascinating, and the research they evince varied and attractive. Then no one can find fault with the admirable temper he everywhere displays in the management of his ingenious arguments, and the many apposite anecdotes and illustrations he produces. Further,—his startling doctrine will have a charm for many minds who are enamoured of novelty, and covet the show of reason for breaking away from old opinions and faiths. I cannot but see that if his conclusions be received, a very revolution in English thought must be the consequence. In all of us there is a curiosity to know something of our remotest ancestry, and it need not be concealed that

\* *The Ascidians of North America*, p. 349.



the unification at which Mr. Darwin and his school aim, holds a spell which beguiles the reader. A vague notion exists that this scheme will give new light upon the nature of the universe, and the duty and destiny of man. I would not charge him with a desire to undermine the Christian religion, although that cannot be said of all his admirers, for many of them have raised the standard of revolt against all theological systems, declaring that matter and its laws constitute the only objects of man's cognizance, and have claimed Mr. Darwin as a potent ally. According to his theory, a germ already microscopic, is made to be the world of minor germs and separate existences. "Not only is the organism of the whole wrapped up in the germ," says Dr. Tyndall, "but every organ of the organism has there its special seed. This is an adventurous draft on the power of matter to divide itself, and distribute its forces." But even admitting Darwin's hypothesis of some "primordial form," from which he labours to shew all organic beings have sprung; admitting Huxley's primitive "protoplasm," from which he conjectures all plants and animals have been deduced; we shall still want to look behind the assumed basis of life, and ask some questions touching its own genesis. It must have been evolved from something. How came it there? Must there not have been a creation, and must not some sower, as Mr. Martineau inquires, have gone forth to sow?

In the origin of man we have to choose between the doctrine of creation and that of evolution or development. For one I hesitate not to avow my decided preference for the Biblical account. I believe in the law of causation in nature, and not in a mere happening. My theory is, that all things have been produced by a Supreme Creative Power, acting either directly, or through the agency of the forces and materials of His own production. I well know how the doctrine of creation is ridiculed by evolutionists; but you must remember that their policy is to tie you down to a gratuitous and crude view of creation, and then attack your doctrine from that point. My view of creation

does not compel me to believe that it was miraculous in the sense of being contrary to, or subversive of law; law and order are as applicable to creation as to any other process. To borrow the words of an American writer, the Mosaic account of Man's origin "does not imply that all kinds of creation are alike. There may be higher and lower kinds. It does not exclude the idea of similarity and dissimilarity of plan and function as to the products of creation. Distinct products of creation may be either similar to each other in different degrees, or dissimilar. It does not even exclude evolution or derivation to a certain extent; anything once created may, if sufficiently flexible and elastic, be evolved or involved to any extent. Man, for example, may be the product of creation, yet his creation may have been in perfect harmony with those laws or procedure which the Creator has set for His own operations. Man may have been preceded by other creations of things more or less similar or dissimilar. His body may have been created in one way, his soul in another. He may, nay, in all probability would be part of a plan of which some parts would approach very near to him in structure or functions. After his creation spontaneous culture and outward circumstances may have moulded him into what we term varieties of races and given him many different kinds of speech and habits."

The existence of a Primary, Self-Existent, Intelligent Power must be a postulate in both theories, since there are grounds for supposing that during a certain period of its history the earth was not, nor was it fit to be, the theatre of life. The highest science will justify me in affirming, that life did once exist apart from protoplasm, or the originating germ, and that matter and life are not inseparably connected. A creation must be conceded. For the following reasons among others I abide by the narrative in the first chapters of the Pentateuch, rather than the evolutionist philosophy, which some one has called, the "baldest of all the philosophies which have sprung up in our



world." *a.* It is more simple. It meets the soul's desire for unity more fully than the involved and interminable theory of descent from imaginary nebulous matter through countless ages of evolution. It is direct, comprehensible, complete. *b.* It is more sublime. It reveals the action of Omnipotence, and in this disclosure we have a sufficient cause for all effects. This belief, I know, is a very old and common one, and because of its antiquity, with some, it is presumably wrong. It is easier to believe nevertheless, that mind creates matter, than that matter originates mind. This is far more rational than a theory which reduces all things to a "gradual summation of innumerable minute and accidental material operations." *c.* Then for all purposes the Bible's account of man's origin is adequate. Geology asks for more than six thousand years for the age of the earth, and if necessary untold æons can be given. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" and there you have room and range for any length of time you may require. But we must not be alarmed by the demands of the geologists, for they may turn out to be unreasonable and misleading. The oldest known human skull, perhaps, is that which has been termed the "Engis" skull, from the cave of Engis in Belgium. Yet in reference to this skull, Huxley himself is free to admit, that it may have belonged to an individual of one of the existing races of men. We need not blush to abide by the Jewish lawgiver's recital of Creation, and are not yet driven to the monstrous assumption that we were not created because we were born.

QUIVIS. It may be shewn, I venture to think, that Mr. Darwin's scheme introduces ideas of uniformity and harmony, where before everything appeared chaotic, and that in the place of a purposeless confusion, he has presented an arrangement of regularity of sequence in the order of nature. If I, as a father, it has been said, had foreknowledge enough to form at this moment all my future plans for the education of my children, and had wisdom enough to adapt these plans in the best possible manner

to their respective characters, as they are progressively developed, and to all the conditions in which they may hereafter find themselves; and had power enough to carry these plans into operation, so that the course of events would not require the alteration of one tittle in their fulfilment,—would not this be a far more perfect manifestation of a paternal character, than the continual change in his schemes which the human parent is usually obliged to make, in order to adapt them to the purpose he has in view. The perpetual recurrence of obvious design, in the latter case, may be, to an ordinary bystander, more suggestive of the intentions of the Parent; but the more profound observer will take another view, and will have reason to doubt, from the necessity of the perpetual change, the wisdom of the controlling power. I think further that an unwillingness to acknowledge a relationship with the lower animals has encouraged much opposition to Mr. Darwin's views. Yet we cannot deny our descent from savages, from barbarians of brutal lives, from men of the type of Caligula and Borgia. Surely some of the poor cousins, to whom Mr. Darwin would attach us, are respectable in comparison with some of these revolting men. We should not be over-fastidious in the matter of our genealogy. With great candour Mr. Darwin admits that many of the views which he advances are highly speculative, and some no doubt will prove erroneous, but he adds, "I have at least, as I hope, done good service in aiding to overthrow the dogma of separate creation."\*

NEMO. As I understand you, Mr. Darwin hopes that he has done good service in proving that the statements of Holy Scripture in the first chapters of Genesis are untrue, and not to be credited. I must own however, that, after a careful and unprejudiced reading of Mr. Darwin's volumes, I am astounded at this conclusion. It is true he has brought forward a number of curious facts and has set down very carefully a catalogue of animals in a progressive order, and has imagined that

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\* Darwin's "Descent of Man." Vol. I, p. 153.



they have in the course of ages passed into each other. But he furnishes no proof, I speak it seriously, absolutely no proof that an Ascidian has ever become a vertebrate; or a seal, a monkey, or a monkey, a man. In my readings I have pencilled along the margin of pages together, "not proved," "no facts forthcoming." Interesting accounts of the possible and actual varieties of species are given, but not one fact is adduced to demonstrate the change of one genus of animals into another. Facts are facts, and for one, I am quite willing to acknowledge them when they are presented to me; but no proof is supplied of the transmutation of animals,—of shrimps into elephants, of snails into tigers,—nor do you catch a glance of the hairy quadruped, furnished with tail and pointed ears, who is the supposed ancestor of man. Nor of that miserable ape imagined by Sir John Lubbock, which crossed in love, or pining with cold and hunger, conceived, for the first time, in its poor addled pate, "the dread of evil to come," and so became the father of theology. This conception, which Darwin gravely adopts, would be most ludicrous, but for the frightful picture which it gives of the aspect in which religion appears to the mind of the evolutionist. Then let me ask you, what has a man of science to do with speculations? As a naturalist, Mr. Darwin has observed and carefully recorded a multitude of curious and captivating facts, but they help not his theory of derivation. His "primordial form" exists no where but in his own imagination. "The logical feebleness of science is not sufficiently borne in mind," says the eloquent John Tyndall, and truly the logical feebleness of Mr. Darwin's books is extreme. If tested by Descartes' maxim, "assent to no proposition the matter of which is not so clear and distinct that it cannot be doubted,"—if this law be applied to the Darwinian theory of man's descent, it will appear extremely loose and imaginary. Philosophy itself forbids us resorting to hypotheses to account for assumed facts.

Not in this way will the Scriptural account of a special and immediate creation be overthrown. No Christian believer in revelation is required to put forth that amount of faith which is necessary to believe in Darwin's genealogy of man. I believe it is admitted even by the advocates of this hypothesis, that there is no unbroken chain of continuity beneath the earth's surface to authorize belief, that every species grow out of some species less perfect before it. Geology informs us of the sudden appearance of new and strange forms, but supplies no previous intimation of their coming. Our knowledge of the strata of earth does not countenance this theory. Then you must remember that in those creatures which manifest the fullest instinct, such as, for example, the bee, it is impossible that this instinct should have grown by cultivation and successive inheritance. From what previous animal, or form of being, did the bee derive its peculiarity? Then this theory clashes with the fact, that civilization and improvement have always come from without. That advancement has not come from within is the evidence of experience and of history. With this agrees the tradition that barbarous races were once in a more civilized state, and have descended from ancestors more enlightened and powerful than themselves. The wild state is natural to the brutes, but the civilized nature to man. It has been asserted, it is true, that man who greatly degenerate reverts to the type of the monkey kind, but no proof of this is forthcoming. A degenerate tribe may descend into such barbarism as to die out, but if it passed into a brute tribe it would become more powerful and more prolific, as domesticated animals invariably become, when they merge into the type of the wild animal. Then finally no vestige of evidence exists that there ever was any beast intermediate between apes and men; neither does any vestige of evidence exist to prove that an ape has ever risen to manhood. If there be anything like proof anywhere existing, it is not produced in Mr. Darwin's books.

His latest work, "The Expression of the Emotions



Man and Animals," he says, "the conclusion that man is derived from some lower animal form, it is not necessary to confirm, for," he adds, "as far as my judgment serves, such confirmation was scarcely needed." I venture, very respectfully to say, that such confirmation is absolutely necessary before most men of ordinary education and science can believe in his "Descent of Man." Where are the transitional links to be found of living animals succeeding each other on Mr. Darwin's theory?

As to your supposed unwillingness among us to recognize the monkeys, apes, and gorillas, as our nearest relations I can only say, that if facts had demonstrated the truth of this theory, we must have admitted our development from them. It is said, "a dislike to acknowledge a relationship with the lower animals is not an expression of the truest Christian feeling, but is opposed to it." Yes, but facts are facts, and there would be no humility, nor any other virtue, in acknowledging what is not believed. Certainly for one I am not indisposed to join Mr. Huxley, in his preference for "a good respectable Ape as an ancestor, to a progenitor of the highest human gifts, who knowingly turns those gifts to evil account." This descent would be quite as honourable as one from men, who have used all the appliances of civilization for the purposes of lust and cruelty. We are bound to own zoological affinities with the animal tribes, and we do it readily. In other matters we admit a relationship to them; man enjoys fruit not the less because he knows some brute creature enjoys it too, nor is sleep less welcome to him because shared by them. You will further see that by the admission of development to account for man's bodily frame, the way would be opened to many dangerous opinions. How do you interpret man's moral and spiritual nature? Would you not also have to extend the realms of morality and religion to the lower animals? I read the other day the following: "It has long been a tenet of mine, that a careful study of the intellectual and moral

development of a child, by a competent observer, would enable him to detect a series of stages comparable to the different grades of the like development which are presented to us in the ascent of the zoological scale. And I cannot see that the truths of Morality and Religion which apply to man's moral and religious nature as it is, are more imperilled by carrying back the development of that nature into a dog or the horse stage, than they are by deriving it from the brute stage of the savage or the 'practical heathen' of our great towns, or from the child-stage of the civilized Christian.\* Is not such writing as this very remarkable? Where is there a kind of evidence that the offspring of a dog or of a horse or of any brute creature, has ever been trained to the intelligent performance of moral and religious deeds? Multitudes of children from the practical heathenism of our great towns have been raised to virtue and respectability of life. It is strange that men can believe that the peculiar instinct of a bee, or the moral sense of man, can be a descent from other animals, or a manufacture; is it not more philosophical to regard them as the bestowments of a higher Power than their own? But rather than admit the existence of a Divine design it is childishly said, "the stag was not endowed with long legs to enable him to run fast, but he runs fast because his legs are long;" and not much better than this dictum of the atheistical school of the Continent is the tendency of Mr. Darwin's doctrine,—the eye was not made for seeing, we see because we happen to have eyes. His hypothesis seeks to deprive us of all evidence of design in the physical structure of animal life, and likewise of the evidence of design in the moral and psychological phenomena of mankind. On this theory of derivation from insensate forms of animalcular animal life, one writer endeavours to shew that genius and ability goes by descent, and is derived by inheritance exactly under the same limitations as are the form and physical features of the whole organic world. "Ea

\* Dr. W. B. Carpenter. "Contemporary Review," Oct. 1872.



man is not an independent creation, but a mere function, physically, morally, and intellectually, of ancestral qualities and external influences." Further on in his book, he says, man is "a conscious whole, formed by the joint agencies of a host of what appear to us to be unconscious or barely conscious elements."\* These and other extravagancies are fairly deducible from Mr. Darwin's theory of pangenesis—the theory that the structure of the living form is built up under the influences of innumerable blind affinities, and that the exquisite and wonderful mechanism of the human body, and also emotion, intellect, will, and all their phenomena, are the offspring of a molluscum or a fiery cloud!

Then I am far from agreeing with you that the generalizations of Darwin have introduced a conception of a higher unity and harmony in the order of nature. The love of unity may be so indulged as to become a source of error, as the alchemists of former times have proved to us. That imaginary relationship, which you introduced, between the parent and the child, appeared to me lame and defective. I think the child would crave to have the Father a little nearer to him and more accessible. As fully as you can desire me, I believe in the constancy of surrounding co-existences and sequences, and that in one sense the hidden movements of nature are conducted "with a uniformity as rigorous as fate." Christian believers have never admitted the lawlessness and fickleness of nature; and never placed creation's laws at the mercy of man's volition; and yet while believing that all her results are sure, and all her workings invariable, they have had faith in the nearness of a Power superior to law and sequence. "Surely few can see much grandeur in the idea that the existing order of things here has resulted from an oscillation of an evolutionary wave which received its first impulse from the Infinite, into which its last undulations will merge. And few, one would think, can derive consolation, satisfaction, or hope, from the idea of an All-powerful One

\* *Hereditary Genius*. "An inquiry into its laws, &c." By F. Galton, p. 305 & 303.

who ceased to exert power ere this world was formed, and before the conditions resulting in the evolution of life were unconscious possibilities. Man would take little interest in so remote and indirect a Providence, and would rebel against the acknowledgment of a self-extinguished Creator, or a God reposing powerless beyond the sun. If it were boldly affirmed that in these latter days the God of the beginning, the Great First Cause, had ceased to be, it is doubtful if man could force himself to believe that any lifeless forces or elements were endowed with designing or creative power; for is it possible to conceive of such transcendent powers, except as attributes of an ever-living—ever-acting Infinite? If it were true that all phenomena peculiar to living beings were in reality only physical and chemical phenomena, would not the very ground out of which religious thought springs be dissipated?"

Here I think I should remark to you that the ancient and world-wide matters of religious belief cannot modestly be treated by modern scientific men, nor by others, as if fabulous and disproved. The deliberate manner in which some assume the erroneousness and invalidity of the Christian Revelation must be thought by them to be offensive to men who have made it their special study, and honestly believe in its Divine inspiration and authority. Let the Christian records first be exposed and rendered baseless, and then treat them as such. But let this first be done. In his discourse on "The Scientific Use of the Imagination," Dr. Tyndall says, "There is in the human intellect a power of expansion—I might almost call it a power of creation—which is brought into play by the simple brooding upon facts. The *legend* of the Spirit brooding over chaos, may have originated in a knowledge of this power." In his address to the students of University College, London, he said to them, "Whether man came originally from stocks or stones, from nebulous gas or solar fire, I know not; if he had any such origin the process of his transformation is inscrutable to you and to



me as that of the grand old legend, according to which, the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now, who has authorized this man learned in science to designate the Scripture narrative of creation a legend? Who has demonstrated it to be only deserving of taunt and ridicule? The Professor tells us of his indebtedness to Emerson and Carlyle. Has he learnt his unbelief from them? His own particular walk in life has been with "heat and light, magnetism and electricity, organic germs, atoms, molecules, spontaneous generation, comets, and skies;" yet he has learnt somewhere the *legendary* character of Scripture! With the eminent Dr. Carpenter I allow that "theologians have much to learn from science," (only it must be science and not imagination,) and that they should not "stop short in the search for scientific truth whenever it points towards a result that seems in discordance with their pre-formed conceptions." Having given this counsel, he asks whether "conclusions by men of science on the antiquity and origin of man are not at least as worthy of our credence as the teachings of *certain ancient books*, which more and more distinctly appear, the more critically they are studied to be simply the records of the early beliefs of the Hebrew race as to their relations to their theocratic head?" In the like manner Mr. Huxley treats with scorn the teaching that God created Adam and Eve. He thinks, which is one of the results of his ethnology, the idea of creation is unphilosophical. He says, "five-sixths of the public are taught this Adamitic monogenism, as if it were an established truth, and believe it. I do not; and I am not acquainted with any man of science, or duly instructed person, who does."\* We are therefore to conclude from this teacher that it is more philosophical to assume that the living and intelligent forms which are around us have sprung from natural causes,—that is, from the action of the

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\* "Fortnightly Review." Vol. I., pp. 273, 275.

blind forces of matter, rather than from the agency of an intelligent and all-wise God! The Mosaic account of the beginnings of organic existence tells us that life was breathed into many forms; that each plant was made after its kind, and each animal after its kind; and that all were created very good, having all their organs perfectly adapted to the purposes we now see them fulfil, not needing subsequent improvements to fit them for use; and since Moses ascribes this work to Omnipotence, it requires immeasurably less faith than that the Man of our day has fought his way, body and soul, through a materialistic slough, and innumerable nauseous transmutations.

A "primordial form," of which no specimens remain, in the course of countless ages, by gradual differentiation of parts, and increasing complexity of structure, and countless cerebral convolutions, becomes (no one knows how) transfigured into man. We are asked to exchange the succinct and sublime account of Moses for this physical, clumsy, insoluble theory, presented to us without any sensible evidence for its support. "He who explores the structure of the human eye," says a writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, "its expressive forms, its exquisite movements, its union of tenderness and strength, its magic chamber furnished with lenses and curtains, and its delicate canvas which receives the vivid pictures of external objects, and presents them to the brain, while it takes back the creations of the mind and gives them an external form and locality,—he who studies this masterpiece of Divine mechanism, and who does not join in the fervid ejaculation, "He that formed the eye, shall He not see!" deserves to be degraded from the rank of intelligence, and placed in that small appendix to human nature which the moralist only recognizes,—"the blind leaders of the blind." By this speculation of the evolution of man from protoplasm or primordial germ, I am required to believe that the eye is a growth, a happening. That the brata have come from the invertebrated. That



terrestrial animals give birth to marine animals. That what is designated instinct is a chance tendency in a material organization. That matter produces in man thought, affection, and consciousness. That the idea of the worship of Divinity was propagated from brute creatures, among whom it is unknown, and developed in man everywhere. Well might it be said; "O that theologians had one-tenth of the faith of men of science." It is not therefore, I think, an unreasonable thing to say, that it behoves the abettors of such a theory as this, to be less scornful in their allusions to Holy Scripture, until they have got something more rational and credible to propose to us. I am confident that sooner or later mankind will come back to a truer faith, and to a living trust in a Personal Ruler of us and of all things, finding Him first in their own hearts, and then without; and that God's Word will tower above all systems in human confidence and affection.

ALIQUIS. Mr. Darwin tells us, that he finds throughout all animated nature, beginning with the lower, and ascending to the highest forms of organic life, certain structural similarities or analogies, which seem to him to denote a common origin. He finds these even in animals in which the primary use of the analogous structure has ceased to exist, and thus establishes as he concludes, a presumption that the species has been varied, not by direct original creation, but by the operation of natural causes. He suggests that in the struggle for subsistence, nature or "natural selection" determines on certain individuals of one species to be transmuted into another and a higher; and that this law of selection may account for the gradual alteration of species from a few primitive forms, or even from one, up to man. In his "Descent of Man," he admits that his hypothesis of "natural selection" has partially failed him, and that he has attributed too much to its action.

I cannot but feel for one, however, that the doctrine of "Continuous Descent with Modification," must lie at the basis of future biological science. If we believe

that to the mind of Deity, the past and the future are alike present, and that His presence is so perfect as to comprehend all the results of the plan on which He works in the universe, we see His hand in the mode of creation supposed by this hypothesis of development fully as much as in that of direct and immediate creation. And if we believe that what we call the laws and properties of matter are nothing else than human expressions of the constancy and uniformity of the mode in which the power of the Creator is exerted, we see that the hypothesis coincides with all that science and religion alike teach respecting the invariability of His mode of working. If, therefore, the doctrine of evolution should in time be accepted as scientifically, and thus theologically certain, such a doctrine would not be inconsistent either with that belief in the original act of creation which is essential to Theism, or with "the recognition of plan and purpose in the number and variety of animated beings." Evolution, or Darwinism, from a Theistic point of view is merely one way of describing what we can observe of God's continuous action upon the physical world; and because the phrase seems tacitly or poetically to invest the universe with a power of self-unfolding, it does not follow that the question of an intelligent Creator and Ruler is thereby decided in the negative by those who employ it. Then further I must remind you, that from time immemorial many Jews and Christians have taken the Mosaic account of the creation of man in a more or less figurative or allegorical sense, and few of us I deem feel ourselves bound to a literal exegesis. All Christian students are familiar with the continuous revelations of religious truth through the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, and the dependence of the latter upon the earlier, and we may fairly expect to find an analogous continuity and correlation also in nature. Law and order imply design; sudden transitions might be due to chance.



NEMO. In this summary of reasons in favour of the evolutionary theory I recognize the authors you have quoted, and must say you have advanced all that can well be said for it, and yet you must know that that is not very weighty. I own to a great surprise that men of thought and culture should be found to write a line in its defence, but it has received in the scientific world a marked provisional acceptance. A system for which we are to exchange the ancient and beautiful account of Holy Scripture, is this unaccountable pedigree of beastial ancestors without one gleam of high or holy tradition to enliven the procession. You must remember, however, that it has not been born among us so much as renewed, for it is a very old thing. It existed in ancient philosophy and poetry in connection with the crudest and most uncritical attempts of the human mind to grasp the system of nature. In main the theory is that all earthly existences resided potentially in mere inorganic matter, and that a chain of spontaneous derivation has evolved man,—his nearest natural relations being apes, or ape-like animals. The evolutionist scheme is held with some variations of opinion. "One school assumes that there is an innate tendency in every species to change in the course of time. Another believes in exceptionable births, either in the course of ordinary generation, or by the mode of parthenogenesis; another refers to the known facts of reproductive acceleration or retardation, observed in some humble creatures; then new forms arising in any of these ways may, it is supposed, be perpetuated, increased, and further improved by favouring external circumstances, and the effort of the organism to avail itself of these, or by the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest." Some of these causes are admissible enough, but they are only adequate to the production of rare and mere varieties in the same species, with a readiness or tendency to return into the original stock. This is very different from deducing *all existences*, vegetable, animal, and human, from one protoplasm, or certain molecules of star-dust. In a previous

conversation I remarked, it was difficult precisely to ascertain the meaning of some writers on this subject. It is true, as Aliquis has observed, that Mr. Darwin now admits he has attributed too much to the action of "natural selection" in his programme of the origin of species. Professor Huxley expresses a doubt as to the existence of an absolute and pure Darwinian. Then with me you will have noticed, that these and other notable evolutionists repudiate materialism. But for one I cannot see how any can accept materialistic doctrines without being materialists, and if charged with holding such opinions, and others antagonistic to Christianity, they must not blame their readers, but their own misty and misleading words. Evolutionism, or the hypothesis that a man may be evolved from a material atom, does look very much like materialism, and also the robbing us of a spiritual First Cause. In truth the doctrine carried out to its logical consequences excludes creation and Theism. We have seen that in this scheme, Herbert Spencer's logic finds no room for an "Originating Mind." He holds that God is "unknowable," and creation "unthinkable," and labours to prove that the initial proposition of the philosophy of evolutionism is that all things were made out of nothing, and by nothing! Such is the inevitable inference from his hard and dry logic.

ALIQUIS. The words just pronounced "unthinkable," and "unknowable;" what may such writers as Spencer be thought to mean by them? They are becoming of frequent use I find, and I should for one be thankful for some definite idea of their signification.

NEMO. Mr. Spencer, I believe, when he applies such words to God and creation, means by them that we do not adequately know the nature of God, nor the details of His operations; but what he alleges as reasons applies as fully to our knowledge either of matter or life. We know nothing absolutely and completely. His words are these on the subject before us: "A thinkable proposition is one of which the two terms can be brought together in consciousness under the relation said to exist between



them. . . . The thinking separately of the elements of a proposition is mistaken for the thinking of them in the combination which the proposition affirms. The proposition that evolution is caused by mind is one of this nature. The two terms are separately intelligible; but they can be regarded in the relation of effect and cause only so long as no attempt is made to put them together in this relation. . . . But when the attempt to unite them is made, the proposition turns out to be unthinkable." To such reasoning we may fairly say, it is "unthinkable" to imagine definite and orderly effects without a cause. A reality may be known though not perfectly conceived. We know a little of time, but know it not absolutely; we know a little of space, but know it not absolutely; we may know God—blessed be His adorable name—by realizing His divine influence and favour upon our hearts, but we cannot "by any searching find out the Almighty unto perfection." Nor can Mr. Spencer give us any glimpse of the possibility of material and dead elementary life-stuff—(call it a primordial germ, or protoplasm, or by any other name)—originating existence and intelligence. The theory of evolution or development is only an adventurous guess, and a daring and gratuitous sweep of generalization. One fact is obvious, that this theory carried to its legitimate consequences, excludes God and design from nature. For the following reasons I object to this doctrine or hypothesis of evolution, whether nebular, uniformitarian, Darwinian, or Spencerian.

*a.* What necessity existed for the assumption and maintenance of any theory of evolution? Who can shew that an obligation rested upon the Creator to commence His work with the production of but one organism or germ? Can science shew that the Creator had not numberless plans of procedure at command? Why, I continue to ask, bind Him to this particular one, of an endless series of transmutations? All that Mr. Darwin can be said to prove, is the possibility of the Deity creating a single living being which should have

within itself all the elements to be employed by Him in the production of all future creatures upon the earth. This cannot of course be shewn to be beyond Divine agency; but why introduce this system of tenantry in the world? Did the old system bring God too near to the world? Does not the agency of Omnipotence, which the Moslem record so explicitly reveals, sufficiently account for the appearances and results of creation? It does seem to me that the creation of a primitive form, with its astounding capacity of being developed through its known changes into a man, is a more miraculous than anything narrated in Scripture. The principle of economy in the exercise of creative power is seen to be a universal law, but the evolutionist's theory stands in direct antagonism to this, and is a law of great possible waste of time and power. All in nature seem to be done by knowing how to do it, but how this truth is outraged and contradicted by this wearying, repulsive and wasteful scheme of endless conflicts, and transitions! To conceive a duck with webbed feet, and a spoon-shaped bill, living by suction, to pass naturally into a gull with webbed feet and a knife-like bill, living on flesh, in the longest possible time, and by the most laborious possible way, we may conceive it to pass from the one to the other state. The battle of life the duck will have to fight will increase in peril continually as they cease with the change of their bills to be ducks and attain a maximum of danger in the condition which they begin to be gulls; and ages must elapse, and whole generations must perish, and countless varieties of the one species be created and sacrificed, to arrive at one single pair of the other. Truly this theory explains no difficulties, and requires for its acceptance more faith than the doctrine of a direct and immediate creation. It involves us in inextricable confusion and mystery. Life, thought, and volition, may be properties of molecules, as are weight and attraction, this we may for the moment allow, yet the question will arise whence comes the force or attribute which in man's nature is at once



material, vital, intellectual, and moral? Either it is God, or it comes from Him, or there is no God!

*b.* Mr. Darwin makes no profession of having proved anything, nor does he affect a demonstration. He has given an ingenious suggestion to account for certain facts which he leaves to time and observation to furnish evidence of its wisdom. Indeed, carefully read, his books do not even propound a theory, but a paradox, since he admits that facts are against him. He cannot override the immutability of species, for while there may be a capacity of variation in species, it is certain that its class never changes. It is not merely that individual members have not had time to change, but there is a limit of variation fixed by a general law,—a neutralizing law which causes all variations within species to have a tendency to revert to the original type. This law naturalists can demonstrate by crowding illustrations. So that this evolutionary scheme is a mere speculation, which, if it were true, might account, it is conjectured, for all organic structures. Still, as I have elsewhere inquired, what have men of science to do with dreams and fancies? Science is the knowledge of facts, and their business is with them only. The safest principles of our knowledge do not permit us to assume facts, and then build a theory upon them, but rather first ascertain the facts, and then form the theory. Every one admits structural similarities in organic life, past and present; that there is a structural analogy, common to man and to the lower animals, and to a certain extent common also to the vegetable world, is a fact that did not require an elaborate defence, while, to account for the "origin of species" in this way is most gratuitous.

*a.* But of course all our reasoning against this doctrine would have been worse than fruitless, if evidence of its truthfulness could have been produced. There is not the slightest proof forthcoming of transition types, and Mr. Darwin's fanciful explanations of the reasons why, are only redeemed from absurdity by the pleasant writing in which his views are propounded.

The palæontologists, with Cuvier at their head, are against him. Then why should species constantly tend upwards? In the downward, as in the upward career we should be directed to intermediate types, but we are not told of any, nor can we find them for ourselves. Then the facts of geology are against this theory of origin of species, and although Mr. Darwin tries hard to shew the imperfection of geological records, yet if his theory been tenable, some proof of it would have been found in the fossils of past ages. We are satisfied by the truth above-named, that the unity of species is regulated by a double law, like the centrifugal and centripetal forces, one of which may admit of variation within the species itself, and the other which drags it by an irresistible chain back to its original type. Illustrations of alterations among animals may be true as long as they are confined to variations within the species, but not beyond. To bear in mind that in reference to man you have something more to provide for than an organic or anatomical structure; you have his intellect and his conscience to account for, as well as his brain. Has a physical perishing organism, produced a reflective, self-knowing and immortal spirit? "All the higher endowments of our apprehension of truth, our consciousness of duty, our self-sacrificing pity, our religious reverence,—all on this theory of human evolution merely transformed sensations; the disinterested impulses are refinements spun out of the coarse fibre of self-love; the subtlest intellectual ideas are but elaborated perceptions of sense or touch; and the sense of right, only interest or duty under a disguise." To quote further; "the doctrine of evolution, setting itself to show how the greatest things may be brought out of the least, fills us with doubt whether perhaps mind may not be last instead of first; whether the hatched and full-fledged form of the protoplasmic egg; whether at the outset anything was there but raw rudiments of matter and force; whether the hierarchy of organized beings are not due to progress."



differentiation of structure, and resolvable into splitting and agglutination of cells; whether the intellect of man is more than blind instinct grown self-conscious, and shaping its beliefs by defining its own shadows; whether the moral sense is not simply a trained acceptance of rules worked out by human interests, an inherited record of the utilities; so that design in nature, security in the intuitions of reason, divine obligations, and the law of conscience may all be an illusionary semblance, a glory from the later and ideal days thrown back upon the beginning, as a golden sunset flings its light across the sky, and, as it sinks, dresses up the East again with borrowed splendour. This doubt, which besets the whole intellectual religion of our time, assumes that we must measure every nature in its beginnings; admit nothing to belong to its essence except what is found in it then; and deny its report of itself, so far as they depart from that original standard. It takes two forms, according as the doctrine of evolution is applied to man himself, or to the outward universe. In the former case, it infuses distrust into our self-knowledge, weakens our subjective religion, or native faith in the intuitions of thought and conscience, and tempts us to imagine that the higher they are the further are they from any assured solidity of base. In the latter case, it weakens our objective religion, suggests that there is no originating mind, and that the Divine Book of the world is but the latest phase of its finished surface, instead of the incandescence of its inmost heart."\* The development theory is regarded as a javelin in the hand of the sceptic, which has been eagerly caught at by the adversaries of the gospel, who have wielded it in support of materialism. Professor Vogt, of Geneva, exults over the fall of the Biblical Adam, as he terms it, meaning the disproof of his existence, and avows his inability to entertain the idea of a Creator. This theory undertakes with a minimum of initial capacity, to account for the maximum of

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\* Mr. Martineau, "Contemporary Review." April, 1872. p. 62.

human genius, and character, and in times like our opens the way to very dangerous opinions regarding man's moral and spiritual nature, his obligations to society, and his responsibility to God.

d. It so far removes the Creator from us, that so of its greatest living expositors reject as we have seen the presence and agency of an "Originating Mind." Unless common words be accepted in a very uncommon sense, this theory directly tends to a denial of the exercise of either creative power, or superintending intelligence, in the formation and development of nature. It is true indeed that a gradual unfolding of the creative plan, and the maturing of it by rules of growth may be entertained without any prejudice to piety, but the direct and logical tendency of development is to dispense with God, and to lodge the power of indefinite evolution in the first seeds of things. Design can have no place in this system, so much so that a perfect and complex human eye is due to no forethought, but comes by accident from some assumed "natural selection." But I need not repeat what has been already stated. May we inquire, if man's nature be a development, and not a creation, are other developments to follow? What will be man's further transmutation? He must have been in his present stage of being an immeasurable length of time; will his next be that of a flying spirit?

e. Then as another serious objection to the transmutationists I would mention, without dilating upon their contradiction of Scripture. The records of Jewish historians have not yet been disposed of, and are not likely to be, for modern science is adducing increasing evidence of their trustworthiness. All our definite knowledge is substantially confirmatory of the Mosaic account. Earth's great antiquity, the order of creation, and the manner of creation, are all becoming strengthened by scientific researches. It is felt that the so-called laws of nature are only instruments, not producing or originating causes, but involving, as their very correlative, the existence of an Intelligent



Agent. It is true as you have stated, that the Mosaic record has been understood in various ways, but this great truth has been maintained from the beginning with marked unanimity,—that the Eternal God is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, animate or inanimate, and that He now maintains and upholds the universe by His power. If we tamper with the first chapter in the book of Genesis, and term it allegorical or anything similar in meaning; what becomes of the second chapter, and of the third, and of the pentateuch? We are told by our blessed Redeemer that "Scripture cannot be broken," and as Christians we believe that the web of Revealed Truth is perfect. The doctrine of an immediate creation pervades all Scripture. The Psalmist exclaims, speaking of this sublime act of Deity; "By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth, . . . for He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." Our Saviour speaking of man's creation has taught us; "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." Paul, on Mar's hill, exclaims; "God that made the world and all things therein; . . . and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." Inspiration further declares; "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. So that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."\* To dispute the narrative of Moses is to challenge all Scripture on the subject of man's creation, as well as the creation of everything we see above and around us. But the spirit of the age suggests that it is unnecessary to admit the continual exercise of the agency of the Creator, to explain the ever-changing phenomena as presented to observation. It is even dreamt that repose or quiescence is more complimentary to Deity than sublime omnipresent activity. The primary convictions of consciousness always lead the mind to a real cause of *whatever has been produced, originated, or allowed to*

\* Job XII ch., 9 v. Rev. XIV ch., 7 v.

exist. "The scientific mind," says Dr. Tyndall, "can find no repose in the mere registration of sequences in nature. The further question intrudes itself with resistless might,—whence comes this sequence? What is it that binds the consequent with its antecedent in nature? The truly scientific intellect never can attain rest until it reaches the forces by which the observed succession was produced." The concise and luminous account of creation and preservation which the Bible furnishes does present us with a cause sufficient for all things. No "natural selection," no germ or mere material datum, could have led up to man's intellectual and ethical being, nothing in the animal kingdom bears the impress of gradation in this respect. We are told in the first chapter of Genesis that to man was given dominion over the beasts of the field—a dominion shared in no degree by his inferiors, and due to the glory of his front, and the stamp of Divinity in his countenance,—the index of the immortal spirit within. This the one attribute mentioned in the account of his first creation, he shares with no living thing; and whether in the wilds or in cities—in the cultivated regions, or the most savage recesses of the world—this dominion has been supreme. The most degraded heathens are as much the lords of the fowl and the brute, as the greatest philosopher among us, and in many cases more so. Whence is this? If there were the slightest truth in the notion, that man's intellectual and moral nature were gradually developed, we should have found, in lower degree, the same subduing power exercised by one species over another. Can any unprejudiced or impartial mind fail to see, that this imperial government was conferred on man at his creation to be his special and exclusive prerogative, on him as the glorious masterpiece of his Maker's hand?

*f.* This natural development scheme fails utterly to account for man's present nature and powers. Why, I ask you again, should natural selection be exclusively or mainly a pioneer of progress? If the struggle for



subsistence evoked the energies of a tapir, and transmuted him into a horse, when food was plentiful and grazing easy, the same natural selection would bring in some cases the horse back or half back to a tapir. Yet in the downward as in the upward variation we look in vain for the survival of connecting links. If the theory of natural evolution could account for man's physical frame,—if fact, experience and reason supported instead of contradicting it—man would still stand out an unexplained reality in his moral, intellectual, and spiritual presentiments. Where is there a shadow of a proof of intelligence among the lower animals keeping pace with their structural development? In insect life, nearly the lowest organism of any, we find more close resemblance to some of the habits and communities of men than in the superior forms. The ant and the bee, for instance, exhibit an industry and political intelligence which put to shame the baboon and the gorilla. You can only account for man's prerogatives and supremacy by assigning to him a distinct origin and place in creation, and this Holy Scripture unmistakably does, which of itself presents a strong claim on our faith in its Divine truth and authority. "As far as we can trace back the footsteps of man, even in the lowest strata of history, we see that the Divine gift of a sound and sober intellect belonged to him from the very first; and the idea of a humanity emerging slowly from the depths of an animal brutality can never be maintained."\* The theory of Divine interposition is the true scientific explanation of man's origin, inasmuch as it alone meets all the facts of the case, and is attested by universal tradition.

Yet I cannot but notice that in some quarters it is assumed, that Christianity and science are necessarily and irreconcilably divorced, and I have further noticed, as if scepticism haunted our age, that if any smart and disparaging allusion to the Bible and Christian teachers be introduced in public

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\* Max Müller,

addresses, it is sure to be received with satisfaction and applause. But I intreat you, be hopeful, for the mists of doubt and controversy will ere long be blown away. Our position must be that of the great Augustine, who firmly held that since revelation and science, do both proceed from the same infallible Truth, they must in reality coincide; yet seeing that with our limited faculties we are imperfectly acquainted with the facts of science, and the exact meaning of Scripture, it must needs happen that while the two are perfectly coincident in reality, they may appear to be divergent until we are better informed. As far as science is a true interpretation of nature, it must be in alliance with all truth, and therefore with true religion. Patience and humility well become us in the presence of nature and of Omnipotence, and in this attitude only will the real victories of truth be won, and the deepening convictions of true students verified, that the more closely creation is examined, the more will its discoveries be gain and homage to the authority of Revelation.



## III.

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ALIQUIS. One of the favourite doctrines of scientific men, and of which great results may be predicted is the indestructibility of physical force. When force or energy has ceased to exhibit itself in one form, it has not ceased to be, but has assumed manifestation in some other form. Light, for instance, as given from gas, may strike the walls, but the force is not destroyed; it is turned into heat, and heat changes into motion, motion into electricity, and so on continuously. The modes of the expression of force may be changed and modified, but in no instances annihilated. "When any kind of action ceases, some other and equal action arises. There is never an absolute ceasing; never an absolute beginning. If any action come to an end, some other continues or follows elsewhere; if any action begin, some other, in that beginning, comes to an end." "Those modes of the unknowable," says Herbert Spencer, "which we call motion, heat, light, chemical affinity, are transformable into each other; and light, heat, chemical affinity, are alike transformable into each other, and into those modes of the unknowable which we distinguish as sensation, emotion, thought; these in their turns being, directly or indirectly retransformable into their original shapes." When, therefore, the modern doctrine of the conservation of force, becomes

firmly coupled with the older doctrine of the conservation of matter, we may rest assured that the human mind will not stop there, but will extend to the study of man inferences analogous to those already admitted in the study of nature. "All vital energy is derived, not from the fiat of a supernatural agent, but from a reservoir of inorganic force, and all the powers now existent in our world have been produced at the sun's expense." For one I cannot say that I fully accept these theories, but they shew us the perils to which Biblical statements, and man's spiritual and moral faculties, are exposed.

NEMO III. On the matters of inquiry you have just introduced I must say two things. One is this, it must be admitted that the theories of science are often opposed to the teachings of Scripture, and the conclusions of reason; but that is very different from affirming that the ascertained facts of science are ever at variance with either. My second observation is this, that now will be seen, more clearly perhaps than heretofore, that the study of the philosophy of mind may be urged as a corrective for many errors of the day. In dealing with the theories you have noticed, you will have to make a thoughtful use of the mind's necessary intuitions and judgments, and much of common sense. There are things we cannot but believe, feeling the opposite to be unthinkable or self-contradictory. In correcting some of the mistakes of confident physicists we shall find the unbiassed and spontaneous conclusions of common life an efficient instrumentality. The language as well as the thought of common life may be employed as a touchstone of theories respecting the qualities and powers of matter as well as of mind. "The natural outspoken beliefs and feelings of men are free from all those biased influences which spring up on the area and within the limits of speculation, from the influences of pre-conceived theories, whether fondly cherished by their originator, traditionally accepted from revered teachers; whether adopted or defended through the pride of opinion, the



tenacity of consistency, or the heat of controversy." The common language of men we must respect, since it expresses unbiassed convictions, which springing from simple intuitions form a belief universal, self-evident, and irresistible.

QUIVIS. But do you mean, that uncultivated men are competent to understand and decide upon truths which are questions among philosophers?

NEMO. "Questions among philosophers!" Assuming that their province is physical science, should they not rather give us answers, and not disputes? The world of the senses is a world of orderly effects; and physical science is but an interpretation of the order in which sensible changes unfold themselves. What room is here for cavils and contradictions, and yet you know science in our day is afflicted with dissensions and antipathies. What one school strenuously asserts, another as strenuously denies. One man declares that to be a self-evident truth which another regards a palpable error, and in the midst of disagreements, the student of natural science must possess some coolness to discover points of concurrence of opinion. Now why should it be so? Are not these variances among philosophers the result of proceeding beyond the limitation which our Maker has imposed upon our cognitive faculties? Is not the liberal use of the "imagination" in investigations of matters of science a fertile source of dissensions and heresies? You will see then that on matters where assumptions and speculations are rife, the observations of natural reason, and the decisions of the mind's intuitive and necessary judgments are of importance. The competition between common sense and scientific "imagination" appears to me a fair antagonism. The facts which the philosopher seeks to discover are the facts or phenomena which are common to all men, and of which all men are actually conscious, or may be. They are not the phenomena which are experienced exclusively by philosophers, whether in the

form of knowledge or of feeling, but those which are extensive as the experience of the human race. When all men experience when they know or feel, they will likely to express in language, since language is thought made visible. Then this language and thought express beliefs which unbiassed consciousness discerns to be true. The phenomena which the philosopher compares, classifies, and interprets, and of which he speaks in technical and scholastic terms, if true, are verified and sustained by the actual beliefs of the natural consciousness uttered in the language of common life. We may then on subjects which are affairs of theory, appeal from the propositions and reasonings of physicists to common necessary judgments regarding the qualities and powers of matter. One of the lessons to be learnt from the recent discoveries of physical science is the true worthiness of our senses. On some objects our senses are not a safe guide, but in general the exact condition of things is found to be conformable to our natural apprehensions. Heat, for example, is discovered to be a substantive reality, and this is what the unphilosophizing multitudes always imagined it to be. Colour, also, is now known to reside, as the common people long ago conjectured, in bodies. Our senses have not been given to lead us astray. Mr. Grove, in his instructive book, insists that "it requires no great stretch of imagination to conceive light and electricity as motions, and not things moving."\* But what has imagination, in the easiest "stretch," to do with science? However, Professor Tyndall truly remarks; "it is not in the human mind to imagine motion, without at the same time to imagine something moved." In illustration of the vagaries of modern science listen to the following words from an influential writer; "It does not seem improbable conclusion that all force may be will-force and thus that the whole universe is not merely dependent on, but actually is, the will of higher intelligences, or one Supreme Intelligence. . . . Matter as an ent

\* Correlation of Physical Forces. p. 25.



distinct from force, does not exist ; force is a product of mind. Philosophy has long demonstrated our incapacity to prove the existence of matter as usually conceived, while it admits the demonstration to each of us of our own self-consciousness, ideal existence. Science has now worked its way up to the same result, and this agreement between them should give us some confidence in their combined teaching. Matter is essentially force, and nothing but force ; matter, as popularly understood, does not exist, and is, in fact, philosophically inconceivable."\*

You will notice I am now with the princes of philosophers, and yet in the midst of confusions. Mr. Wallace gives us in the above quotation a representation of idealism, greatly in advance of the school of Berkeley, but this he does in defiance of our consciousness of necessary judgments of the qualities, as well as the powers of material realities. Against the metaphysical refinements of idealists, we set our simple and unyielding convictions of the existence of material forms, distinct and isolated from mental perceptions. The cannonading of logic will never dislodge these primitive attestations. We have an original and ineradicable belief that the objective in existence is as really present as the subjective. Because the objective exists we can preserve it in memory, and bid others inspect it, who cannot fail to discern the identical reality. The external reality cannot reveal its own being and appearance,—it cannot speak for itself—but its features are its own, and are not communicated by the mind, but only perceived as an object that is not ourselves. That matter has a true existence of its own, is our irresistible belief,—a belief arising not so much from "the feeling and corresponding consciousness of necessity," as from our certain knowledge of its appearance and qualities. The man who gives no faith to anything but that which claims the evidence of immediate consciousness, not only annihilates all materiality, but destroys the minds

\*"Contributions to the History of Natural Selection." By Mr. Wallace. pp. 353, 354.

of other men, and leaves only intact, verily, no other existence but his own mind. But even further, determined to abide only by present consciousness, and to conclude that a thing is not because it is possible to conceive its non-existence, then the power of memory may be challenged, all past sensations and ideas rejected, and personal identity itself so attacked that it falls. The fact of perception, and the fact of consciousness, the former evidencing the reality of matter, and the latter the existence of a thinking principle essentially dissimilar, furnish us with a philosophical foundation on which we may plant a firm foot. Man was made not much to think and speculate, as to act; and there must be some definiteness in his knowledge, and some boundaries of his thought, otherwise the purpose of his life cannot be attained. I believe with you in the eagle eye of genius, and in the endless progress of the human intellect; but since man's mind is finite, there are limits to its profitable investigations.

It would be serviceable to remember the observation of the philosophical Hume, that the "science of man is the only foundation for the other sciences." It is little more serious than amusing to find some men of science treating metaphysics, or mental philosophy, with contempt, when it is so evident that a moderate acquaintance with it would have prevented the confusion in which they are plunged. I could not say with an old writer, "that metaphysical studies are the most profitable means, next to the grace of God, of opening the eyes of human understanding;" but they constitute a noble and invigorating pursuit. They lead us to the foundation of things, and enable us to perceive the certain coherency, and value of the many branches and divisions of knowledge. Providing exercise for the faculties of the mind, which tends to sharpen and strengthen them, they directly aid in all intellectual occupations. They furnish us with light to accompany all our researches, and with a certain intelligent dignity which diffuses grace over our other investigations. They help us to work forward



from the vague to the distinct, and instead of unfitting us for the active duties of life, are the best preparation for them, and preserve us in the provinces of comprehensible and profitable research. We must not repudiate mental philosophy because of the mischievous perversions, or the scholastic jargon and inanities, with which by some it is associated and confounded.

Dr. Tyndall for instance, asserts that the cause of motion must itself be motion, but acquaintance with the human mind would correct such an assertion, since it cannot account for the existence of any given motion by merely referring it to some previous motion. There can be no motion except as the result of the exercise of force, but in no instance can the force itself be resolved into motion. Even a body in motion does not possess any force by virtue of that motion, for if it strike a body at rest, and thereby set it moving, there is here no real origination of motion. We can only explain the origin of motion by tracing out the reality, whether person or thing, possessing or exercising force. If the force be traced to a thing as distinguished from a person, the mind demands, in order to the complete explanation of an existent effect, that we admit that some *person*, some *intelligent agent* has supplied the conditions of the action of that force. The mind cannot rest until it reaches this point. Yet Professor Huxley boldly states; "The whole analogy of natural operations furnishes so complete and crushing an argument against the intervention of any but what are termed secondary causes in the production of all the phenomena of the universe, that in view of the intimate relations between man, and the rest of the living world, and between the forces exerted by the latter and all other forces, I can see no excuse for doubting that they are co-ordinated terms of nature's great progression from the formless to the formed; from the inorganic to the organic; from blind force to conscious intellect and will."\* The human mind repudiates such random statements. There is no fact better established than that each change

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\* "Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature." p. 108.

of the position of a body in space is an effect, the action of a force belonging to some reality,—person or thing; and a further fact is, that the degree of the force exerted can be measured only by the effect produced. This is comprehensible, and the means of verification are within our reach. But the Newtonian law, that “every body or substance continues in its state of rest, or of uniform motion, in a straight line, except in so far as it may be compelled by impressed forces to change that state,” cannot be accepted by human thought. “The continuance of a body at rest,” and “the continuance of a body in motion,” are different things; for it is evident that a body in motion is an effect. It will follow, as you cannot but see, from the assumption that a motion once originated cannot cease, that “an exertion of force which will move a body a part of an inch, is quite sufficient to move it ten millions of miles.” It is plain then that the theory of the conservation of energy, is based on the speculation that all motion is perpetual. It is based also on the assumption that one mode of motion may be converted into another, and that in any given series of transformations each motion is exactly equivalent to the one which preceded it, and which first determined its existence. I venture to describe energy or motion—effects, demanding for their production and continuance in existence, an adequate cause; and force I would call, the property of a body by which it is rendered susceptible of motion or energy. Force is what acts in all that occurs—in what happens or is done by things, be they material or spiritual. If force and matter were two distinct things, were they actually opposed to each other, it would follow that we must be able to separate the forces and powers of plants, for instance, from the dead material. But cut a body into its smallest particles, divide it mechanically or chemically, as much as ever you desire, or are able, and you will never light upon a power without matter. Force and matter will always be found united; they are never separable except in thought; hence forces liberated or racted from materials or substances, is a delusion.



Thus "the conservation of force," and "the conservation of energy," are totally distinct doctrines. Mr. Grove tells us that "the words light, heat, electricity, and magnetism, are constantly used in two senses, namely, that of the force producing, or the subjective idea of force or power; and of the effect produced, or the objective phenomenon. The word motion, indeed, is only applied to the effect, and not to the force, and the term chemical affinity is generally applied to the force, and not to the effect." The supporters of the theory of "the conservation of energy" overlook the fact, that while the powers of matter are all connected, they are not identical. Heat can never be converted into light, nor light into heat, heat cannot be converted into electricity, nor electricity into magnetism. The forgetfulness of the fundamental distinction between correlation and convertibility has been productive of the wildest theories. The doctrine of "the conservation of force" we must admit, since it is really nothing but one aspect of the truth that matter is indestructible except by Him who gave it its existence. Matter and force, even in the sharpest chemical separation, remain one. The doctrine is clearly stated by Faraday, in his "Researches in Chemistry:" "A particle of oxygen is ever a particle of oxygen; nothing can in the least wear it. If it enter into combination and disappear as oxygen—if it pass through a thousand combinations, animal, vegetable, and mineral—if it lie hid for a thousand years, and then be evolved, it is oxygen with its first qualities: neither more nor less. It has all its original force and only that."\*

And now what becomes of the theory that light, heat, and chemical affinity, are transformable into sensation, emotion, and thought; and these in their turns re-transformable into their original shapes? Does not this assume that all the thoughts, and feelings, and fancies, once possessed by a human mind, are now floating somewhere, or acting somewhere, as light, as

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\* Page 454.

heat, as electricity, or as chemical affinity? Is not this the necessary result of the creed, that the form named thought may be transformed into the form named light, and that this can be again re-transformed into its original condition? We have seen that material forces are only correlated, or may come into such relations, that the action of any one of these powers shall supply the conditions of the action of all the rest. But let me give you Mr. Grove's words, "forces are correlative, but not identical;" so that the theory of the transformability of mental force into material, and the convertibility of the imponderables around us into intellectual modes, is simply gratuitous. Then what must we say of the theory, that Aliquis instanced at the beginning of this conversation, that all energy and vitality in plants, animals, and men, are drawn from the sun, or from "a reservoir of inorganic force?" The conclusion to which such language evidently points is, that great general laws, inexorable in their operation and causes in endless chain of invariable sequence, are the governing powers in nature, and that they leave no room for any special direction, or providential ordering of events. This notion that everything existent in our world is the effect of a material and necessary cause, we reject for two reasons among others. It rests upon the assumption that forces are convertible, which we know to be false. From the observed and known orders of facts, we find that the supposition that all the phenomena presented are manifestations of but one physical force cannot be entertained by the mind. If all effects were the same in kind, perhaps we then might refer them to the individual action of a single force. The "unity" clearly revealed by the phenomena of creation is of another kind. And then remember that the speculations you have broached, and which claim the sanction of great names, are directly opposed to the correct philosophy of causation. This insists that there can be no event, and of course no beginning of conscious existence, without the exercise of power.



by an intelligent agent. The human mind requires that a Creator's agency is as necessary to the beginning of each separate sentient being, as it was to the origin of the first and living organism. There cannot be such a thing as "creation by law;" it may be according to law, but the power to originate can belong only to the agent, and action in harmony with law is plain evidence of the working of a mind. Living beings are created under law, but not under an unconscious law of invariable sequences. In the proper sense of the word law is, as Austin has defined it; "a law laid down for the guidance of an intelligent being, by an intelligent being having power over him." Power can only be predicated of a conscious personal agent. Hence our first idea of law is probably got from the consciousness we have of a power of causing our volitions, and of giving uniformity and order to our own actions. We put a law upon ourselves. By another stage of the same process we impose a law upon others, making them, as we do ourselves, follow in their actions a prescribed order. This power we possess—the power of impressing our own antecedent volitions on our own actions, and on those of others; we possess this power in respect also to the material things around us. We construct a machine, and our law is operative in that machine, and in its action, as it is in our own actions, and in those of beings like ourselves. These laws that men impose on the wills of other men, and according to which they subject material things to certain uses and ends, bear stamped upon them the impressions of the human volitions, which have brought them into origin. Where also they have had their beginning in other human volitions than ours, we can discern their existence, and trace them back to their commencement. It is thus from natural things, and also from signs and acts in the moral world, we arrive at the idea of a Divine Creator and Lawgiver. The analogy of these with human affairs and artificial or manufactured things is complete. The same process

which from a consideration of the laws of a piece of mechanism brings us to a knowledge of a mechanic, and from a consideration of the laws of a community to the legislator, brings us from the study of creation, to the knowledge of the Creator, and from the laws of the moral world to that of a Divine Lawgiver. Wherever we direct our inquiries we find causes which are but the effects of others, and those of others in a long chain. For every cause which we can detect there is another cause which lies behind; and for every purpose which we can see, there is another purpose which lies beyond. We ask ourselves, therefore, whether these have not a First cause also, standing in an analogous relation to them, as we and others like ourselves, do to those things which we may be said to cause to be. The analogy of natural things with human, as it regards adaptation to a use, and as it includes economy in construction, and economy of labour, might be traced out at great length, and reveal abounding evidence of a Divine Originator and Sustainer of all things. This kind of evidence Mr. Darwin has used in his remarkable book on the "Fertilization of Orchids." The analogies of the natural contrivances in these plants, and ordinary human mechanical contrivances, are so marked that the great evolutionist, seems unable to explain the former except by terms borrowed from the nomenclature of the latter. It is true that the laws of nature are fixed, while those of mankind are variable. In all that is made by the hand of man spontaneity is to be traced. The law of purpose and of operation varies. But in nature it is not so, and all is invariable. Hence there is not that evidence of personal volition which "change" supplies. But personal volition is not irreconcilable with unchangeableness. Mr. Darwin lays too much stress on his canon, that nature does nothing suddenly or by a bound. If a thing be made perfect for its use, thenceforth it becomes unchangeable in the counsels of a perfect being; but this does not exclude spontaneity from the act by which it came into being.



The plan on which the animal frame is constructed, and by which the functions of life in animals are carried on, is invariable, and has been so, as far as we know, from the time when animal life first appeared in the earth. In all warm-blood animals we find the heart, the lungs, the arteries, and veins, the stomach and the brain. "Never in all the changes of time has there been any alteration throughout the whole scale of organic life, in the fundamental principles of chymical and mechanical adjustment on which the great animal functions of respiration, circulation, and reproduction have been provided for."\* From the absolute invariableness of this arrangement, reasoning from analogy, we can argue only its perfection. This reasoning we may carry from organic into inorganic being. The invariableness of the laws by which light is reflected, or refracted, or polarized, is no argument that it did not have its beginning in the act of Him who said "Let there be light and there was light," but only of the perfection of the wisdom which guided that act. The conditions and laws of action of every existence in creation have been appointed by the design and volitions of an Intelligent Agent. Be assured that the notions of materialism cannot stand before the intuitions of the mind, and the conclusions of reason. In the realm of the human mind materialism finds two crushing enemies,—“one in the affections, the other in the intellect. One is the power of things hoped for, a power which never dies; the other is the evidence of things not seen, and this evidence abounds in all we see.”

QUIVIS. It is evident that your doctrine in relation to human nature is, that there is in man a mind or soul which is distinguishable from the brain. But the cerebral or association theory, supported also by great names, appears to me to identify intellect and brain so fully that a distinct spiritual existence or principle in man seems lost. We are told that a physiological psychology is the

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\* Agassiz's "Geological Sketches." Page 41.

only solid basis for the science of the soul; that brain convolutions, and nerve vibrations, or nerve growth clearly account for the being, endowments, and functions of the human intellect; and that vision is simply nervous response to the undulating light, and touch an adjustment of particles in the innervated cuticle according to the molecular agitations in the soul with which it comes in contact. A few physiologists who dissent a little from the associational theory account for many mental results by what they call process of "unconscious cerebration." The theory which I should value your judgment is, that which makes the brain and nervous system the proper substance of the soul, and its phenomena to be explicable by the peculiar activity of this highly organized material substance. It has this in common with the materialism of the grosser sort, that it holds it to be impossible there should be any agent of psychical phenomena except matter.

NEMO. IV. We have already, I may I trust be allowed to say, extricated the mind of man from several materialistic entanglements, and from this more subtle complication we shall, I hope, witness its escape. The cerebral theory is a popular form of modern materialism; and certainly can claim as you say the sanction and advocacy of great names. We cannot but be thankful for an enlarged knowledge of our own nature, for the exquisite examination of the more subtle forms of matter or of force, and for the patient attempts to lay bare the fine processes through which mind acts on body. It is certain that these researches in physiology have cast light on the sensational source of our ideas, and have pushed up matter to its extremest nerve-currents. The discoveries of the distinction between the sensorial and motor nerves, and those of the phenomena of reflex action; and of the connection of the same phenomena with those of sensation; and the identification of the centres of conscious activity with separate departments of the cerebral organism; these and some other dis-



closures by physiology, cannot but be gratefully acknowledged, and tend to shed much light on the material aspect of the human mind. I have all along conceded that the brain is the physical organ of the mind, or the medium through which it manifests itself and holds intercourse with the outer world. In some such way as the musician employs the instrument for the production of music, the mind uses the brain as the means of its activities and presentations. In some of its movements it may elude our knowledge, then certain changes taking place in the nervous system in connection with mental processes, have suggested the temptation of a physical cogitation, as if consciousness and thought were functions of the brain, and the products of organic action. I grant the brain may be stirred by physical influences, and thus be more apt to mental work. Mysterious indeed, is the mode of our present existence, and ineffably fine, yet powerful, is the bond of intercommunication between spirit and flesh, as revealed in modern psychological investigations.

But remember that admitting the brain to be the organ of mind, is very different from conceding that the substance of the brain itself elaborates and perfects thought. Let the alliance between the mind and body, and their mutual actions and re-actions, be ever so close, pervading and even "*formative*," we can never account for man's acts and desires on the assumption of one substance and life in him. Cerebral philosophy produces no evidence of the self-knowing power of the brain, nor of the conscious activities of the nervous system. Brain agitations and growths are really nothing more than physical processes; but these processes, no more than the food we eat and assimilate, are not thought, not intelligent personality, not conscious self, looking back, pondering the present, or anticipating the future. As a question of fact the structure of the brain and nervous system in no way indicates that they are capable of the vibrations or oscillations which are affirmed of them. Their composition is not entirely

fibrous, and what seem to be fibres are not capable of rapid and forcible vibrations, nor are they sufficiently numerous to answer to the myriads of millions of states of thought and feeling, which are required by memory and imagination. No definite proof of the alleged change has ever been witnessed. No nerve cell has been known to be formed in connection with a picture fixed in the memory, or a purpose decisively taken. In accordance with the law of the formation of these imaginary traces, the soul acquires consciousness, and increases it by the mutual attraction of similars; but all the while it remains spaceless, or unextended; whereas corporeal matter, according to the same law, gains in local extension and fixity, and at last becomes rigid and unchangeable. The soul is able to grow when the brain decreases with age, and looses in bulk and weight; is it not obvious then that the soul alone is susceptible to sensible material impressions? Remember further, that these so-called traces on the brain, of ideas and of feelings, must owe their existence very frequently to other acts besides those of the bodily senses and external stimulants. In these cases did the brain impose upon itself traces and impressions? The mind's acquisitions, countless in number, and prodigious in range and power, never swell or enlarge the head, or produce anything extended. But by nutritive material increase the body becomes larger, it increases in extension locally, but left to itself never can become conscious. The brain is the chief and central organ for the support of mental activities, but mind does not depend on the size of it, since experience shows that dwarfs in spite of their small brain, are often intellectually more clever than giants with their larger ones. As a fact the size or superiority of the brain is not a certain indication of mental power. The brain of the elephant, for example, is much larger than that of man. Nor does this power depend upon the proportional size of the brain as compared with the whole body; for the brain of the elephant is smaller in proportion to its body, than that



perhaps of any other quadruped ; and yet few exceed it in sagacity. Judged indeed by this proportional criterion, several even of the smaller birds must rank above man. So long as the soul is consciously active it requires the stimulants which it has received, and which remain movable, for the purpose of supporting consciousness, but it is childish to affirm that all the stimulants are irrevocably connected with brain and nerve impressions.

Then how can this corporeal theory of mind account for the embellishing and almost creative energy of the imagination ? How can any disposition of fibres, or vibrations of the nerves, account for its vivid, innumerable, gorgeous, and sometimes fantastic picturings ? This notion of certain impressions being made on the sensorium, analogous to the impressions of a seal on yielding wax, is on all sides untenable. How can an impression on the brain give rise to the invisible thing we designate memory ? I re-call the image, for example of a church, gazed upon years ago ; and what is it that I see ? something traced on my brain, or something invisible and immaterial answering to the mind's nature ? I do not gaze in this case upon impressions or traces on the brain, but perceive the church as an *invisible reality*. This notion of a certain residua being left on the composition of the brain, is entirely imaginary, and throws no light on the subject it professes to explain. Not in this way can the gulph be bridged over between the finest material marks or processes, and—consciousness. Not in this way can the reality of thought, volition, and affection, in man be accounted for. We must admit into his nature an element or principle distinct from the substance and motions of the body, although in this earthly state of being dependent upon corporeal conditions. Our soundest philosophy does not require us to proceed beyond the admission that there is a strong and constant fellowship of the flesh and the spirit and this terrestrial existence. Perhaps memory is in closest alliance with the bodily organization, and the

most exposed of our mental faculties to physical and brain changes. But bear in mind that when the action and stores of this useful and beneficent endowment of our nature have apparently been annihilated by disease or old age, the soul is not thereby lost. Memory is only one attribute or manifestation of man's mind. When this is affected and crippled, the other powers of the active and thinking principle in man are seen to be uninjured. The paralysis and obliteration of memory, do not expunge affection, judgment, moral perceptions, and spiritual aspirations. These, the loftiest operations of mind, may be in fine and animating force when the capacity to recall past events has fallen.

QUIVIS. We cannot but see how very dependent the mind is upon the body for its knowledge, its enjoyments, and its activities. The suffusion of the brain with blood or water disqualifies the soul for action of any kind, or stupefies it into entire unconsciousness. It would appear, I venture to say, that the whole soul is more dependent on the body than you seem to allow.

NEMO. No, I am fully with you on this point. The mutual sympathy of body and soul is ineffably intimate and unmistakable, as Dr. Tuke's "Illustrations of the influence of the Mind upon the Body," abundantly prove. But as we have seen in our earlier conversation the brain may be extensively diseased and wasted, and even memory through the infirmities of age lost, yet there are such manifestations of real mental life as demonstrate a dissimilarity to the collapsing physical organism. "The mind may be in operation although the suspension of volition over the muscles destroys its connection with the external world, and prevents all communication with the minds of others, it is, indeed, difficult to say even when the external senses are completely and absolutely closed. . . . I have been curious to watch the state of persons in apoplexy and disease, and I am satisfied that, where an ordinary observer would not for an instant doubt that the individual



is in a state of complete stupor, the mind is often active up to the moment of death. A friend of mine, who had been for many years the chaplain of a large hospital, informed me that his still larger experience had led him to the same conclusion.\* The modern and plausible doctrine that every mental process is the result of the association and blending of ideas, when united with a principle which explains association by the conjunction of nerve-cells into nerve-growths by the increased energy of nervous stimuli, really means nothing, and is only an example of the readiness with which some men lay hold of materialistic analogies to account for spiritual facts and relations. An impression on the sensorium, even when responded to by reflex nervous activity, is not the act of knowledge by which the mind distinguishes the object from itself and from other objects; nor does the tendency thereby created to its repetition explain the act of imagination or memory with respect to it when represented a second time. Appeal to your own consciousness, and you find yourself separable from the brain, although it may be employed as an instrument.

But I have lingered on this physiological and corporeal theory of the human intellect to indicate, not only its contradiction of true philosophy, and of consciousness, (which in the knowledge of man will be found inseparably united,) but to notice it in one or two of its moral bearings. I will not insist on the scattering this theory causes of our necessary convictions or intuitions, and of the genuine primary perceptions of the soul, resolving them all into material and customary connection of ideas, and bringing all under the law of sense association. But ponder how it bears on the reality of the human conscience. Professor Bain in his "Mental and Moral Science," can find no subjective ground for conscience, or any innate type of it. "Conscience," he says, "is but the reflex of external forms of authority." We should like to ask him how these external forms came to be there? Does man develop from himself

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\* *Psychological Inquiries*, "First Series, by Sir B. C. Brodie.

what has no root in him, or are these forms communicated direct from some wholly foreign supernatural source? Either way would be more wonderful than the existence of an innate conscience, the second—the communication of that to an intelligence for which the intelligence himself holds no corresponding ground whatever—would simply be more miraculous than anything for which credence is claimed in Christian evidence. The abettors of this theory teach that the exclusive source of knowledge for man is sensation; they insist upon the presence and action of material forces in all conceivable cases; and seek to unite us to the service of an idolized humanity, and to the worship of an intellect without sentimentality or abstraction. This is bringing us back to the old pagan state, and leaving man to struggle with hopeless feebleness against inevitable sorrow and death. Then see how it robs man of immortality. The soul, in this theory is only a convenient term for the highest result of activity which matter manifests in its finer and more ideal forms; so that when the organism is disintegrated, the activity of *this soul* must terminate. Its immortality, so called, is only the immortality of matter. Hence they tell us that not the smallest atom of the sum total of existing matter can ever disappear from existence. Matter is thus the source of perpetual and endless life. They may concede an immortality of force, or an immortality of thought; but they cannot allow us the immortality of a personal and conscious life. Conscious immortality is not a form merely of future existence, but as Scripture tells us, an immortality of our present individual life. On this scheme the dead live only in the recollection of their survivors.

ALIQUIS. It is plain that the cerebral physiological theory of man may be challenged on the principles of sound philosophy, and likewise by self-consciousness, a safe and unyielding authority on mental subjects. It stands, as it seems to me, condemned further by the contradiction of our native intuitions and consciences, and by its direct opposition to a personal immortal



By whatever names endorsed it cannot explain man, nor form a science of nature, and must ere long pass into that abyss into which already so much abortive philosophy has gone. But I should like to hear your opinion on a philosophy which appears to be more popular than the one just referred to, and one which aims more completely to remove the foundations of our present knowledge and of all morality and religion; I allude to the so-called "Positive Philosophy." The fundamental doctrines of Comte, and the main outlines of his theory, are thus summed up by J. S. Mill. "We have no knowledge of any thing but phenomena, and our knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute. We know not the essence nor the real mode of production of any fact, but only its relations to other facts in the way of succession, or of similitude. These relations are constant, that is, always the same in the same circumstances. The constant resemblances which link phenomena together, and the constant sequences which unite them as antecedent and consequent, are termed their laws. The laws of phenomena are all we know respecting them. Their essential nature, and their ultimate causes, either efficient or final, are unknown and inscrutable to us." This negative philosophy professes to trace three steps in the history of every science; the childish or theological; the youthful or metaphysical; and the positive or perfect stage; in which religion and metaphysics have been completely cast aside. As recognized by Comte, man is only a mass of nervous substance, incased in a material shell, the functions of which, so far as they are deemed worthy of notice, are simply physiological, with the added capacity to expand or modify the incasing skull. His own words are; "The positive theory of the intellectual and affective functions is therefore henceforth unchangeably regarded as consisting in the study, both rational and experimental, of the various phenomena of internal sensibility which are proper to the cerebral ganglia, apart from their external apparatus. It

therefore is only a simple prolongation of animal physiology, properly so called, when this is extended so as to include the fundamental and ultimate attributes."\* From these words it is clear enough Auguste Comte makes the intellect of man an offspring of the brain, and all the great powers and faculties of our nature merely the exquisite finish and product of the laws of matter.

NEMO V. It is true, as you have remarked, that this kind of philosophy appears in these days to be in everybody's mouth. It includes only what can be proved, and accepts that which alone can be scientifically established as a fact, and nothing more. Viewed as a whole this is a great system of materialism, silent about God, spirit, personal immortality, and diametrically opposed to Christianity. It affirms in effect that there is no God, but physical force; and natural philosophers are its prophets. It is obviously contradictory of the Christian religion, inasmuch as it destroys the possibility of its proof, makes man's social duty higher than his individual,—science the only revelation,—demonstration the only authority,—nature's laws the only providence,—and obedience to them the only piety. Its materialism as you have shown is akin to that of the cerebral and associational scheme, admitting no agent of psychical phenomena except matter.

Of Comte himself I have not much to say. His breadth of generalizations, his great and exact knowledge of some sciences, and the severity of his criticisms, entitle him to our consideration. His views are original and comprehensive, and have on the continent, as well as among ourselves, attracted attention, and won not a few ardent adherents. According to Littré his system is of immeasurable extent, embracing the whole universe. "The universe now appears to us a whole, having its causes within itself, causes which we name its laws. The long conflict between immanence and

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\* "Phil. Pos." Lecture 45.



transcendence is touching its close. Transcendence is theology or metaphysic, explaining the universe by causes outside it; immanence is science, explaining the universe by causes within itself." Plainly then, positivism is but another name for naturalism, fatalism, or materialism. In later life Comte felt the yearnings of a religious sentiment, and added to his philosophy a system of religion in which collective humanity was his god, and the only object of worship and reverence. Two hours a day, divided into three private services, were to be spent in the adoration of humanity, under the form of a living or dead woman, and this alas! is to be the inspiration of a new and truer piety for man! His life was sombre, his social relationships unhappy, and his character it is feared immoral. The probability of mental derangement in his later life is the best apology for the absurdity of the religious portions of his system, for his vagaries, and for his conduct.

—What to me is surprising is that his philosophy should have excited so much attention, and have secured so many disciples. I fear it largely influences the public mind, and can claim notable supporters. Under the name of secularism it is actively propagated among the masses. The assumed conclusions and results of physical science aid its pretensions. The secularist asserts that nature is the only subject of knowledge, the existence of a personal God being regarded as uncertain; that science is the only providence; and that the great business of man is to attend to the affairs of the present world. It is impossible to estimate the extent to which these views are diffused. It is saddening to think that this most negative system of all has taken such hold on men. The manifest tendency of positivism is toward atheism, if sternly argued out. Comte is silent about the existence of Deity; and his worship of the ideal of humanity in the form of practical ethics and social study, indicate this atheistic tendency. It discourages the belief of the supernatural, of a Divine government, of human freedom, of miraculous inter-

ference, of mind additional to the body in man, and of immortality.

—But notwithstanding the wide-spread influence of positivism, it may be shewn to have, as a doctrine or system, no foundation in sound philosophy. Its teaching proves beyond all possibility of demur, that the unceasing exercise of the agency of the Creator is the condition of the continued action of the constituted powers of the universe. There can be no event, and therefore no beginning of conscious existence, as we see it for example in man, without the exercise of power by an intelligent agent. This is likewise the direct and innate conviction of the human mind. Philosophy knows nothing of law except as a rule of action existing in some mind. As we have remarked before, we cannot predicate agency of law; that can be only affirmed of a conscious personal agent. Even when it is said that secondary powers act according to law, it is not meant that the powers themselves choose to obey a perceived rule, for we are compelled to think that the volitions of a prior agent supply the necessary conditions of the action of all secondary powers. The mind cannot believe in a happening. The common sense of mankind rebels against it. The idea of intelligent causation is its fastest, spontaneous, and over-powering conviction. We cannot be shut up to our senses and mere phenomena. There are multitudes of truths believed in and acted upon, of which our senses give us no information, since they come to us from our inner-selves, and the promptings of our nature. The denial of a Divine and Spiritual interference in the works of Creation and Providence would force us into a darker night than Paganism drew to earth, for man's earliest and most tremulous speculations ever carried with them a theological character, and hinted at some living and acting Divinity. No one can peruse the fine remains of the Pagan mind, as they come to us in poetry, mythology, in morals, and philosophy, without discovering, with an occasional exception, its belief in a pervading life and



power superior to nature. "Belief has a basis of cognition, the cognition has a super-structure of beliefs; in a sense we know space, for it is present to us; certainly body occupying space, is ever before our senses; but when we look on space as having no bounds, we are beyond the territory of cognition, we are in the region of faith. The one conviction equally with the other, carries within itself its authority and validity. No man is entitled to restrict himself to cognitions, and refuse to attend to or to yield to the beliefs which he is also led to entertain by the very constitution of his mind. No man can do so, in fact."\* What a proof of the hollowness and insufficiency of positivism for man is furnished in the fact that Comte felt driven to provide a religion and a worship for his followers. He had no God, but he devised a "collective humanity" to receive adoration, being in fact a deification of his system of science and sociology. He tried to extinguish theology, but the desire to worship burned on, a desire which could not be quenched. What is this desire of worship but an inborn moral intuition, a broad reality, an inalienable truth of our nature? To this kind of religion and ceremonial, this passionate self-mesmerizing adoration, this praying without uttering words, Comte clung more and more fondly as he advanced in years. And strangely and painfully J. S. Mill says of it; "It has superabundantly shewn the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the belief of a Providence, both the psychological power and the social efficacy of a religion: making it take hold of human life, and colour all thought, feeling, and action, in a manner of which the greatest ascendancy ever exercised by any religion may be but a type and foretaste." In a later work on Comte and Positivism, Mr. Mill actually states; "We venture to think that a religion may exist without belief in a God, and that a religion without a God may be, even to Christians, an instructive and profitable object of contemplation." What sort of instruction can

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\* Dr. M'Cosh's "Intuitions of the Mind." Page 199.

youth receive from writers with such creeds and sentiments?

—The scheme of positive philosophy is distinctly metaphysical,—metaphysical in its pretensions, and metaphysical in its details,—but Comte with a sort of disdain eschews metaphysical science. But he seeks to liberate abstract forces from matter! One would have supposed that mind known to us by consciousness, would have been accepted as one of the most positive of sciences. But the first thing Positivism does, is to dispense with the science of mind, as mind, altogether. He rejects both psychology and logic, and the foundations on which the science of nature and all our inquiries rest, even the ineradicable beliefs and convictions of the human spirit are ignored. Comte's repudiation of mental science is characterized even by Mr. Mill as a "grave aberration."

—Of man and of mind this so called philosophy makes little account. The study of mind is reduced to a study of bodily functions, the study of law, and of physical associations. It is true the soul is invisible, but we know much and many things about it. Are not the following truths disclosed to us we still inquire in everyday consciousness? We feel our separation from things visible,—we feel our independence of them,—we feel our distinct existence in ourselves,—our individuality,—our power of acting for ourselves this way or that way, and our accountability for what we do. Is it not so? Then does not the intuition "I ought," or "I ought not," follow immediately on our consciousness of our own powers of reflection and choice? On this conviction of the heart and conscience abides, as on an unassailable foundation, the doctrine of man's responsibility. The perception of this great truth may be clouded for a time by a plausible logic, but thought and reflection recover the vision, and we escape from a tyranny of force and blind fate into a realm of moral freedom, where pure reflections, virtuous deeds, high imaginings of hope, and free actings of love, are attainable, if not attained.



Man is conscious to himself that he is higher and nobler than all the visible objects around him, higher than the animals, and still higher than lifeless matter, and lives above a world of passive motion or mere instinct. It is thus that man's nature contradicts the materialism and fatalism of "Positive Philosophy." His consciousness of reason, and of the power of inward choice, forbid him to believe that he is chained by any physical laws or fatalistic necessities. Here I must add a little more on the Positivist's theory of the human soul. Comte, as we have seen, hardly recognizes the presence and agency of man, and speaks of him only as a mass of nervous substance, so that thought, emotion, and aspiration, are reducible to the workings of mechanical statics and dynamics. Still this theory is supported by such men as Stewart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Bain. They deny that the states of the soul are performed by an active and conscious ego, and affirm that mental products result from a tendency first acquired by frequent association, and then augmented into an inseparable connection. The repetition of mental acts may be at first distinctly conscious, but they are afterwards performed with a mechanical readiness. It is assumed that the facility acquired by the repetition of acts becomes purely mechanical, and that the acts in question pass entirely out of the domain of consciousness, and are taken up by the passive energies, first of the associational faculty, and then of the brain and nerve cells.

It is not necessary to repeat what has been said on this theory, but nothing appears further from the truth than that the brain can be proved by the kind of reasoning adopted, to be identical with the soul itself. "An impression on the sensorium, even when responded to by reflex nervous activity, we repeat, is not the act of knowledge by which the mind distinguishes the object from itself and from other objects; nor does the tendency thereby created to its repetition, explain the act of imagination or memory with respect to it when

represented a second time." If memory consists only of impressions or sensations, formed on the tissues of the brain, we may inquire of the materialist,—what is it that experiences these impressions or sensations? If memory "is but acquired forms," what is it that is conscious of their existence, that reviews them, dwells upon them in voluntary inspection, and elicits facts and laws from them? "As images on the retina are not ideas until a man attends to them, for he does not see them while his mind is intently engaged about other things; so, whatever may exist, actively or passively, in the brain, affects not the consciousness until the mind is in correspondence with it." Allowing, as we do, that the brain is the medium through which the mind holds intercourse with the external world, and that in some sense it is the repository of impressions; yet no idea will remain, and no impression abide, without the self-applied action of the soul. But how is this? If memory be only impressions,—engravings and pictures on the leaves of the brain,—what is it, we continue to ask that knows they are there? Must not the knowing power be distinct from the brain? Are not the register and the registrar distinct in essence and office? Recollection is not the act of the brain, but of a voluntary and intelligent influence upon it; for, in some inexplicable manner, the spirit employs it as an organ for this purpose. There must be mental effort, (call it determination, or desire, or attention,) to preserve impressions, and distinguish them from others. As is well known, both the fact and power of retention are in proportion to the determination with which we attend to the subject we wish to remember. How frequently we blame a person for forgetting, what with care he might have recollected. In these cases we do not censure the brain, but the perceptive and intelligent personality, which uses the brain. Memory, as a faculty, is the self-energy of mind; and is weakened by cursory and superficial surveys of things, but enlarged and strengthened according to the force and fixedness of



effort with which it is employed. If the brain, however, remembered by itself, why all this exertion? Whatever its size, excellence, and healthiness, it remains absolutely destitute of intelligence; and, unless influenced by an indiscernible and spiritual entity, abides just like the other portions of the body. Memory is a state of mind; its immateriality is disclosed in its works.

QUIVIS. It will not I trust appear presumptuous in me when I say, that from my first acquaintance with the scheme of Positivism I saw nothing in it commendable and trustworthy. I cannot but view it as one of the barest and hardest forms of infidelity. In your account of it you have been tolerant of its absurdities and sentimental farrago. Comte says his system will take away from woman all necessity for active labour of any kind. She will be the priestess of humanity, and the embodiment of love and virtue. In one word, the knee of man should never more be bent, except before woman! But, before whom shall these feminine idols bow the knee? Do they acknowledge no superior? It has been truly said, Comte gave woman everything except justice. He certainly appears to have denied religion to her. But how do you free the human mind from that system or doctrine which makes the universe nothing but the manifestation of God—one grand and perfect whole? Pantheism professes to assure man of his real union with the source of his own life, and the life of all things; and pleads for the constant contact of Divinity with humanity. It is this religious aspect of the doctrine that has held for so many spirits a fascinating power. Man's perfection is to know by contemplation the universe in which he has his being. His soul is a part of the universal soul, and after its earthly manifestation is again re-absorbed. With the pantheist nature is a vast unit, in which human beings are parts, vibrations of a chord, radiations of the eternal light. Emerson, the American, writes, "I am nothing—I see all—the currents of the universal being circulate through me—I am part or particle of God."

NEMO. VI. Pantheism in these days denotes the disbelief of a personal first cause, and fixedly identifies the soul or divinity of nature, with nature itself. Our first duty will be to see if we can distinguish between the Pantheism of Averroes, (a noted commentator on Aristotle in the twelfth century,) which regards the world as an emanation, and sustained by a Living Spirit; and that of Spinoza which regards the sum total of all things to be Deity. The doctrine of Averroes more nearly approaches Theism than that of Spinoza, where the Creator is forgotten in creation; but there is not much difference between the two, inasmuch as they agree in the belief of the eternity of matter, the impersonality of mind, and the absolute denial of immortality and religion. The notion of a diffused impersonal Divinity appears a refuge into which some have escaped from the difficulties which attach to moral evil, and to the conception of a personal God,—the Creator and Governor of the universe; but the refuge is that of naked atheism, and pure materialism. According to Spinoza, God is the one Eternal Substance, which makes its appearance in the two-fold realm of thought and matter. God exists only in human thought, and has no independent or personal existence. Atheism is the denial of a personal God, while Pantheism admits a Divinity without a will, and without conscious intelligence; but what is the real difference between the two? Atheism denies that there is anything in nature besides nature; and does not Pantheism do the same when it says, that God is everywhere and in everything, and that there is no cause of anything, or that the cause is unconscious? There is no midway position for the pantheist between atheism and theism, so that Pantheism is only a fine name for the universe, and but another word for positivism, naturalism, and materialism. The man who rejects Christianity as a rule finds no resting place in deism, but becomes either an atheist or a pantheist. In Germany especially, and to a lamentable extent in England, a pantheistic philosophy



is wide-spread and influential. In the hands of Bain and Mill it assumes a sort of sense-idealism, excluding the world outside, the Divine personality, and our own. Nevertheless it does appear to me to be contradictory of the true principles of philosophy; contradictory of man's nature; and glaringly so of the Christian religion.

a. Pantheism, as positivism, we say logically pursued, leads to atheism, since they alike exclude from the world the presence and government of a personal God. Look around, we are in the midst of existences, organic and inorganic; whence came they? The Pantheist says, there has not been a beginning, no conscious shaping of anything, no guiding intelligence or will. If the universe, therefore, had no Originator, and did not make itself, it must have been developed, and has unfolded from something into its present order and appearances. I may affirm in the name of our surest science, that the hypothesis of spontaneous life-generation is disowned. And yet the development theory clings to it by affirming, that the unintelligent and unconscious universe is continually creating itself. Unless indeed with Mr. Darwin we personify "Natural Selection," and believe with him, that it "is daily and hourly scrutinizing throughout the world every variation even the slightest; rejecting that which is bad, preserving and adding up that which is good, silently and necessarily working whenever and wherever opportunity offers at the improvement of every organic being." But how absurd is this, for it is making "Natural Selection" a conscious agent, and a real intelligent providence! Yet "Natural Selection," if the words mean anything, means selection without volition, without intelligence. It reminds one of Professor Huxley's sentences; "that when the wind heaps up sand-dunes it sifts and consciously selects from the gravel on the beach grains of sand of equal size!" And yet this vision of development presents to many minds an attraction, leading them into the indistinguishable past,

and connecting with it an unbroken progress, a continual and endless self-evolution. But we have before surrounded this matter, and I continue to ask; who originated, stored, and launched the germinal powers from which "the beauty and infinite complexity of the co-adaptations between all organic beings, one with another, and with their physical conditions of life," have proceeded? A law is not a power, but an appointment; who gave law to creation and existences? The Pantheist says, there is no conscious mind, no intelligent personality separable from the universe; therefore his system is thinly veiled atheism, if not its arid and barren self. Dr. Strauss offers us "The All," or "Universum," which he informs us possesses neither consciousness, nor reason. The evolutionist or development teacher says that there is no necessity to invoke an external Agent; since "trees grow, and so do men and horses; and here we have new power incessantly introduced upon the earth. But its source is the sun, for he it is who separates the carbon from the oxygen of the carbonic acid, and thus enables them to recombine." In both systems you notice the necessity of an Omnipotent Creator and Ruler is altogether superseded. If it be admitted that there is development in creation, and germs of organization to begin with; we press the inquiry, whence came the first germ producing power? The development advocate says, "I cannot tell." Here then in this theory is a mystery more amazing and profound than any truth or statement of God's word. And what is gained in simplicity, intelligence, and probability, by denying the agency of an infinitely powerful, wise, and beneficent Creator? The Pantheist says in answer to our inquiry; "Whatever is,—is; and there is neither right nor wrong." But there is little gained by arguing against such speculations, for their abettors have not one genuine fact or principle of true philosophy to advance in their defence.

*b.* Then mark how humanity rejects Pantheism. It denies to man the exercise of love, of faith, and of hope.



It outrages his spontaneous convictions and higher yearnings. It banishes law, and annihilates the ground of accountability. It robs him of conscience, prayer, personality, volition, and immortality. Remember one mental fact is as worthy of attention as any fact disclosed in a chemical laboratory, or on the roof of an observatory. Is not this then a mental fact,—that the thought of God is latent in the human mind? Do we not think of a Supernal Existence as naturally and easily as of the world around us, or of our own being? This spontaneous and universal idea or intuition of a Living God is something more than a superstition, and amounts to a strong presumption that God really exists. This belief in God is assumed in all scientific knowledge, for His Being must be admitted in order that man may know anything besides. The conviction that there is a self-existent personal Intelligence, on whom the universe depends for its existences and relations, is a necessity of man's nature. I may be told that these instinctive perceptions are the result of education, of association, of habit; but this belief is common to man, and found always and everywhere. Whatever may be affirmed to the contrary, a nation of pure atheists has never been known, for when alleged exceptions to a recognition of a Supreme Power have been carefully inquired into, the ancient statement "that there is no nation so barbarous and wild as not to have believed in some divinity," has been fully vindicated. So that man is a witness for God's existence, he is the correlate of the Infinite One, whose Being must be assumed, in order to explain the finite. Man's primitive perceptions and affirmations are the revelations of a moral sense, of a conscience, which must be accepted as an inner discovery of God. Then there is the witness of the world without, for the universe is a thought as well as a thing, design is everywhere manifest, and design implies thought; hence there must be a thinker—a designer. That this thinking and designing Agent should be self-existent and eternal, is no greater mystery than that

matter and life should be self-existent and eternal. The great argument for God afforded by the order and adaptations in nature amounts well-nigh to a demonstration. But the law of causation need not further be insisted upon, for as much as is needed here is included in the affirmation, that mind intuitively believes that every event is caused, that is, produced by the action of some agent or agents, and this conviction is original and unyielding. Pantheism, as we have said, does not make God a cause, since it rejects every doctrine of causation; it does not make Him a person, for it cannot tolerate a personality either human or Divine. Then what provision does it make for the needs of the soul? Rather, what provision can it make? There is no object for serious religious affections; no object of religious homage; none to whom man can yield love, obedience, or worship. It does just mention that we may worship our own self-consciousness, under the idea that in each reflecting mind God has become conscious of Himself. But what honest or modest man can worship himself? As a rule, on reflection; "he abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes." If this should not meet the requirements of man he may appropriate the divinity of the Positivist, and bow in sorrow, admiration, and speechless,—at the form or image of woman! Now I ask is this sort of imagination to replace Christianity and the Bible? Is this sentimental inanity to supersede the inspiring and sublime worship and service of the gospel? Are the men who advocate such schemes as these, the men to destroy, as Sir W. Jones calls them; "The adamant pillars of our Christian faith?"

c. Further, I now regard it a *prima faciæ* evidence of its untruthfulness, any scheme or doctrine which contradicts the truths and precepts of Holy Scripture. The Bible has won for itself a hearing on all matters affecting God, man, the external world, and destiny. It is a master authority on all these subjects. Throwing its light across centuries, commanding the intelligent assent of the greatest and most erudite minds, satisfying



the deepest necessities and cravings of the soul, proving itself the parent of civilization, the nurse of learning, and the minister of charity and hope; Holy Scripture cannot be contradicted without awakening the most serious inquiries. Scepticism is constantly changing its ground; beaten from one position it escapes to another; and has yet to adduce its first proof of essential untruth against the Bible. How pantheism, and its associated heresies contradict the Bible, and seek to despoil it of its glories, I will not spend one moment in attempting to indicate. Only one golden Scripture will I quote, the prophet's inquiry; "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" I affirm with Mr. Kingsley that men of science "are finding, more and more, below their facts, below all phenomena which the scalpel and the microscope can shew, a something nameless, invisible, imponderable, yet seemingly omnipresent and omnipotent, retreating before them deeper and deeper, the deeper they delve, that which the old schoolmen called '*forma formativa*,' the mystery of that unknown and truly miraculous element in nature which is always escaping them, though they cannot escape it, that of which it was written of old; 'Whither shall I go from thy presence, or whither shall I flee from Thy spirit?'"\*

ALIQUIS. It appears that the arguments employed to deliver mind from the assumptions of materialism, are also necessary to rescue it from pantheism. By the constitution of our nature it is evident we must hold to the reality of things above us, realities apart from sense, and different from matter. Our intuitions have been implanted by our Maker, and must be commanding in the realm of truth. But you have been pleased to notify your readiness to give us some account of Herbert Spencer, and of his views of man. I find him referred to as a great authority on mental philosophy, and on the subjects we have had under review.

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\* Mac Millan's Magazine, 1871. "The Natural Theology of the Future."

NEMO. VII. You will find this philosopher a perplexing study. Of his profound and comprehensive acquaintance with the sciences of nature and of intellectual philosophy, there can be but one opinion, but he is an involved and indefinite writer. Spencer is careful to tell us that he is not a materialist, and in a recent paper of his on evolution, he writes; "To shew how anti-materialistic my own view is, I may perhaps, without impropriety, quote some out of many passages which I have written on the question elsewhere. Hence, though of the two it seems easier to translate so-called matter into so-called Spirit, than to translate so-called Spirit into so-called matter which latter is, indeed, wholly impossible." "See, then, our predicament. We can think of matter only in terms of mind. We can think of mind only in terms of matter. When we have pushed our explorations of the first to the uttermost limit, we are referred to the second for a final answer; and when we have got the final answer of the second, we are referred back to the first for an interpretation of it. We find the value of  $x$  in terms of  $y$ ; then we find the value of  $y$  in terms of  $x$ ; and so on we may continue for ever without coming nearer to a solution. The antithesis of subject and object, never to be transcended while consciousness lasts, renders impossible all knowledge of that ultimate reality in which subject and object are united."\*

Let us look at this language; bear in mind, a model exposition of spiritualism! Nothing can be gained by charging the writer with anything disingenuous. Still I am bound to say, there is great haziness about this language, if not a deceptive play of words. What does Spencer mean by "so-called matter," and "so-called spirit?" Are they two realities or only one? Which do you say? He disclaims materialism, but why is he so ambiguous in his terms? If not a materialist, he knows that spirit and matter cannot be translated into each other. They contradict and repel each other in essence and properties. They never can be brought

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\* Spencer's "Principles of Psychology," Second Edition. Sec. 63 and 272.



into one root or element. Neither is it philosophically correct to say, that we can think of mind only in terms of matter, since we have names for the properties of each which contradict and negative each other. In a figurative sense we may, it is true, apply some expressions to mind which we apply to matter; but both our knowledge and terms of spirit are distinguishable from our knowledge and terms of matter. We have knowledge of matter by sense perception; we know mind by consciousness. As we have remarked before, consciousness as an act, is the energy of a knowing or thinking agent; but consciousness as an object, is the spiritual being discriminated from the act by which it is known, and discriminated as a being which is apprehended really to exist. The object of consciousness is not a thought-object, but a being-object, a permanent existing agent. But we have no such knowledge of matter. Further, what Mr. Spencer may mean by the "Ultimate Reality" of which he speaks, is difficult to determine. If he mean by it the Divine Personality, then matter and mind, the subject and object, are not united in Him, for "God is a Spirit." If he mean anything else, then he must be a materialist, believing that subject and object, matter and mind, are one substance under different names. In order to confront such mystifying language as that which Spencer uses, I would recommend the appeal to your consciousness of an inner self, for while it is not the only source of our knowledge of the soul, it is of the first importance. But Mr. Spencer teaches, however anti-materialistic he may regard his own views, that mental action is only a more highly developed form of vital action, the capacity for which, in its turn, has been developed from a lower form of being, even the unorganized, for he is an astute defender of evolutionary philosophy. His necessary truths in the human mind are the product of a tendency first acquired by frequent association, and then augmented into an inseparable connection, which being transmitted with increased force through many generations of material or cerebral organisms, re-appears at

last in the form of innate and spontaneous knowledge. Is not this materialism, assigning the phenomena of the soul to the laws and relations of matter?

But can Herbert Spencer escape from the charge of pantheism, if not atheism? He not unfrequently treats evolution as though it were a living force, endowed with the energy, and invested with the wisdom, of a personal Creator; and then again it sinks to an innocent symbolic formula. He will not admit that an originating mind—meaning by this phrase a Supernatural and Divine Personality—is the cause of evolution, or has had any thing to do with the primordial elements out of which the order, beauties, and adaptations in nature have all sprung. No sound thinker ever pretended to advocate the possibility of grasping in human thought the cause of all things, for it is this, perhaps, which he means, when he says that all knowledge of “an ultimate reality” is an impossibility. No pride of theology has ever lead a Christian scholar to assume that man is able to comprehend that which is behind appearances. Spencer argues that we can have no trustworthy knowledge of the absolute. He does barely allow that we may know that the Infinite exists, but he maintains we cannot know what it is and excludes every kind of intellectual apprehension. This is going a long way into the region of nihilistic philosophy, the philosophy of ignorance and despair. But bear in mind what I have previously said, that we cannot know that a thing is, without knowing to a certain degree what it is. A self-existent being is a being as truly and more eminently than a dependent being, but both are beings, and have relations which make it possible for the finite to have *some knowledge* of the infinite. Yet we need not carry over to the infinite the misleading images which belong to the finite, nor the delusive associations which adhere to it; while to deny that there are relations which are common to the two, is to deny that we can know the Infinite at all. The relations between the finite and the infinite need not, of course, be identical with those which exist between the finite and the finite, but they must be real and cognizable relations. “To



say," with Herbert Spencer, "that we cannot believe in a Creator, because if we do, we must conceive of Him as a carpenter, working with tools and upon materials provided, and to dispose of the belief in creative energy by the phrase, the carpenter theory, is to betray some ignorance of generalization, if not more serious defects in respect of both taste and fairness." Even an "indefinite consciousness" that the infinite is, must involve some knowledge of its relations.\* Truly we cannot know the infinite exhaustively or adequately, but it is knowledge nevertheless, and not mere faith or feeling. If we cannot assume the Infinite we can neither define nor reason the finite; without the intuition or conviction of the unconditioned, it is impossible to have any grounded science of the conditioned. Spencer will not long be a power among us, I venture to predict, for when his obscurities and plausibilities are exposed, his writings will command slight consideration. His science of man seems culminated in evolution, association, and nescience.

We have been patiently, and I trust honestly, looking at the question; Is there mind additional to the body in man? Reverently would I answer undoubtedly there is; and a solemn reality it is to admit, for it is our felt relationship to Deity. Man is not merely a bodily organism, but is also a spiritual personality. Whatever be the indispensableness of his outer form, whatever be the unconscious and conscious processes and re-actions of his soul, whatever the modifications it receives from physical changes and associations, man tracked to the centre of his being is found to be a spirit. In the regions of the body it moves as a ruler, and thus adoringly addresses its Creator; "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews."

What is the duty we owe to ourselves? What does the soul ask at our hands? The sacred page affirms, that "the Lord hath made His wonderful works to be

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\* Porter's "Human Intellect," p. 659.

remembered." He has created nothing in vain, and all His works claim and reward examination. As surveyed by man creation is seen to be a vast theatre of wonders, surely formed to impress his cause-seeking and reflective mind; since its amazing contrivances, its beneficent arrangements, and its transporting scenes, seize the imagination, and stir the powers of his nature,—raising him to the Author of all, and associating with Him whatever is commanding in majesty, awful in power, perfect in wisdom, and unbounded in goodness. Now the noblest object of contemplation, the richest mine of inquiry, is the nearest to man. His own soul is the most august and interesting of all finite studies. The contemplation of rational and intelligent mind is the loftiest subject in the universe. It is true that metaphysical inquiries have too often been barren both of interest and profit; but this is not so much the fault of the science itself, as of its professed expounders. Properly defined mental science is the least abstract and most practical of all sciences, and may be turned to immense daily advantage. That mirror of Deity, which we are always carrying within us, should be gazed upon. Let us ponder the solemnity of the gift of a soul, a gift which outweighs the wealth of worlds. How can we hope to be forgiven if we neglect and starve it? Devotion to science, diversion in intellectual luxuries, the observance of the amenities of society, attention to worldly estates and the business of life; are more than worthless if they deprive us of time and taste for the promotion of its welfare. In too many lamentable instances it now pines, while its physical associate revels in abundance, and is pampered with every indulgence and attention. Yet what interest is worthy to be mentioned in comparison with devotedness to the soul? The most costly acts of self-denial for its good will be rewarded,—acts that may not only impose restraints upon debasing passions and unworthy pursuits, but upon the more respectable temptations of earthly riches and honours. What is expended in the service



and benefit of the soul is decided gain to man. Sacrifices for the spirit are refined and honourable deeds of personal interest. The soul asks for suitable occupation, for its education redeems life from its littleness and vanity. Hence the Divine significance of life is found in its proper culture. The soul seeks the confession of its supremacy in our joys and sorrows, and of our ruin in its loss. Very little examination will suffice to convince that the allotment of happiness is not according to wealth, or outward condition. The soul carries with it all the world over our joy and hope, or our sorrow and despair; it makes its own atmosphere, and life is its reflection,—its light or gloom. The brightening or shading of our earthly being comes from within.

We cannot but be grateful for that pressing curiosity to solve a vast variety of problems which is so strong in man, and great souls are characterized by nothing more distinctly than by a lofty and universal prompting to unravel the new and the unknown. But this spring of progress, this passion for knowledge, needs directing. Inquiries should be based on solid grounds, to lead to fruitful results. What special good has come of the serious problems of the pious disciples of Aquinas and Ockham; Duas Scotus and Abailard? These great intellects and devout souls fought for the solution of questions which now cause a smile, and have proved barren of profit. The four subjects which have engaged our attention, God—the human soul—the origin of creation—and a future state—will ever be inviting to man's mind, and interest generations yet to come. They are every way deserving of the researches of the human intellect, and hold a charm for the fresh spirits coming into existence. But what I wish particularly to guard you against is, the ridicule with which these subjects are sometimes treated, as if no advantage could accrue from their consideration, as if they were involved insoluble mysteries, or as if no certainty had ever been reached in their survey. In addition to this you will find men placing the study of physical science as more worthy the investigations of the human spirit, and the

unity of philosophers will be adduced to discredit the alleged disagreements of theologians. As we have seen, however, there is little settled up to the present time in the higher departments of physical and physiological inquiry. But a real and intelligent accordance on the origin of things—the government of the universe—the incorporeal personality of man, and its prolongation after death; does obtain among men of the highest intellectual power and attainment. The men who magnify the divisions of real thinkers on these subjects are unworthy your confidence. In God's word, as well as on natural and scientific grounds, assuring conclusions are reached on these great questions. The true cure for irrational musing over unprofitable enigmas, and a safe defence against scornful and carping insinuations, you will find to be solid faith in real religion; in that religion which subdues and satisfies the inner man of our nature, that provides for us intelligent worship, inspiring fellowships, and healthy and ennobling spiritual activities. In addition to faith in this, which is the religion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I would further adduce as a protection from the assaults of doubters and cloudy sceptics, an acquaintance with the human mind in its powers and capacities. Thus fortified by the knowledge of the Divinity of the word of God, and of your own mental being, instead of being disturbed by the taunts and quibbles you now find coming from names even of prominence among us, you will be more disposed to smile and pity. I measure my words when I aver, that on the matters we have had under review, rational and soul-satisfying information can be obtained.

Consider too, what lies heavily on my own heart, how modern speculation and sceptical inuendoes are hampering the movements of Christianity. In every direction I am pained to notice that the materialism and infidelity of the age are fostering a marked indifference to spiritual and practical godliness. The spirit of denial and of naturalism is abroad. I see it everywhere. On the minds of innumerable multitudes of young men and maidens, it tends to the notion that there is nothing



definite in human morality and duty, and that it matters little what any one believes, since nothing is fixed and binding. Men are incurring the gravest responsibilities in circulating half-settled convictions and mere triflings with truth. Surely society, surely the individuals of which society is composed, do not require the bonds of a healthy union to be relaxed, or the perception of obligation to honour and truthfulness to be dimmed, by the speculations and sceptical suggestions of so-called philosophers; human nature unaided is already too fearfully prone to such things. I may be told I am exclusive and intolerant, and that there may be religion, and the cultivation of the moral faculties without the inculcation of dogmas, and the exposition of doctrinal points. I may be further reminded, that religious dogmas have nothing to do in inclining our hearts to keep the moral laws, and have no influence on practical life. But as you know I should reply to this, that such objectors were ignorant of the wants of the human soul, were ignorant of the religion of Jesus Christ, and ignorant of that which constitutes the most powerful spring of healthy human actions. You cannot have an operative and self-denying morality apart from its super-human foundations and sanctions. Nevertheless the disposition is clearly manifested in some quarters to dispense with all invisible and spiritual authority, and snap the ties which unite men with an unseen world. "Why," asks the German Dr. Strauss, "should there be a separate religious society at all, when we have already provision made for all in the state—in schools, science, and the fine arts."\* This writer, and his school of thought, would abolish all religious worship, and reject the idea and desire of a heavenly and posthumous world, which so relieves the struggles and the woes of life by its animating hope. And as we have seen there are writers of kindred sympathies in England, and some of them are as outspoken. But looking with all seriousness to you young men, I say to you, what you will find to be

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\* "The Old Belief and the New," 2 vols. By Dr. Strauss.

true, there is a hunger in the human soul deeper than brain, and nerve, and bone, and muscle. There is a moral disorder in man, affirmed by Holy Scripture, and attested by consciousness, which lies behind all physical disorders, and which no process of education can remove. There is a sense of guilt which robs the soul of peace, and which no method of moral and physical training can take away. There are aspirations after immortality, which no discoveries of physical science can satisfy; and there are fears in the prospect of death and futurity, which no philosophy can dispel. Here I am not dealing with fancies, but with facts; with facts in every man, and everywhere. We have already seen, that the highest philosophy of our men of science can give us but a lame and miserable religion. This so-called religion may lull the spirits of men who deny all distinction between right and wrong, between moral good and evil,—men who regard conscience as an illusive development, and holiness a matter of mere taste or sentiment,—of men who live in the midst of refined or luxurious society. But what shall we give to the working, sorrowing, loving, hoping men and women of the human race? It was affirmed from a Professor's chair the other day, that "dogmas may point out the way of salvation, but they do little or nothing to incline our hearts to keep the moral laws." More error than truth is found in such an utterance as this; but we thank the Professor for identifying dogmas with salvation. What is salvation? Is it not the most necessary and stupendous blessing mortal man can possess? Does it not include the bestowment of the highest good of time, and the blessedness of eternity? Are dogmas not then to be inculcated, because they *only point out* the way of salvation? What a reason, for the repudiation of dogmas. Can there be morality in every day life without salvation, the morality which receives the approbation of God, as well as of men? This utterance reflects the un-spiritual and un-devout spirit of our age. It is this species of teaching in lectures, in sermons,



and in books, which is doing the irreverent and deadening damage we deplore. I warn you against such statements. Beware of them, reject them. I trust I have not been unfair or discourteous towards any whose opinions I have been compelled to controvert. This I have sought to avoid, and with Niebuhr I hope I can say, "I do not require from others anything of which a higher spirit, if he could read my soul, could convict me of having done the contrary." I do not believe in perversions, concealments, or ungenerous insinuations. These will never aid the service of truth. She courts the mountain top, the free breezes of the sky, the pure light of heaven. Here she lives and expands. But I must finally remind you we are living in a jocose, misty, and unsettled age; an age of reckless novelty of speculation; perhaps I may call it,—“the hour and power of darkness;” yet let us live in hope. The light will come. The human mind cannot long endure the uncertainties and contradictories of the present hour. I am looking for a great and blessed revolution of thought and life. The darkness and agitation of nature may be ominous of coming storm, but they are not unfrequently prophetic of change, of light, of calm. God lives, blessed for ever be His adorable Name! our Father in Heaven reigns.

THE END.

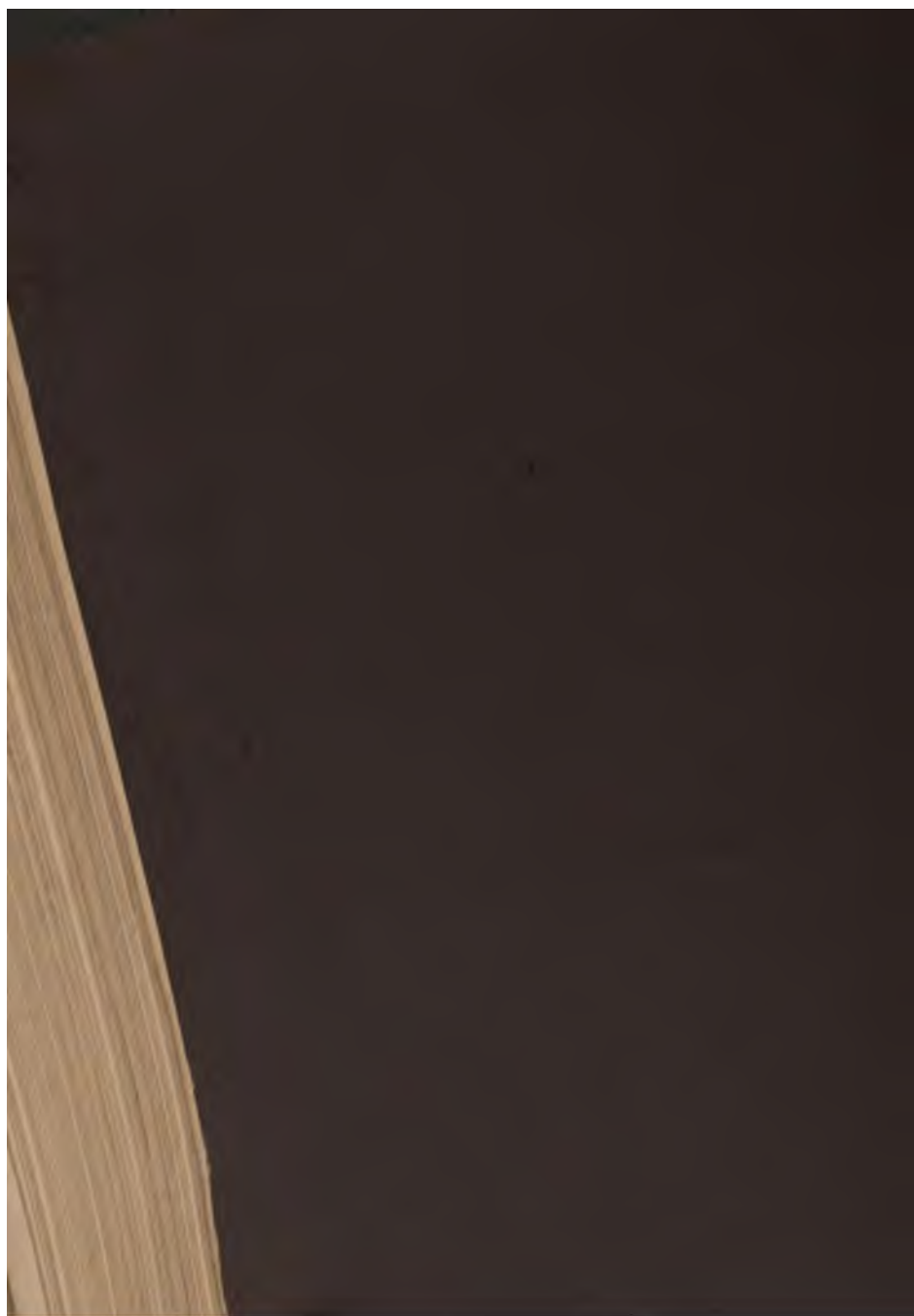
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